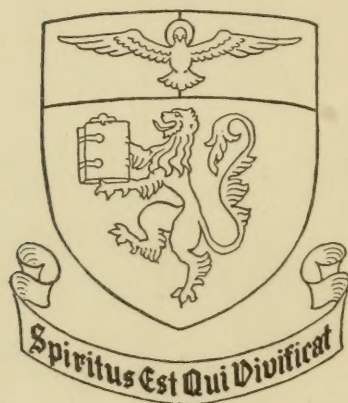



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Drawn by Gerald Griffin

Having made her arrangements and cautioned
Jed not to say a word of her destination, Faby
now set out on her lonely journey

THE INVASION.

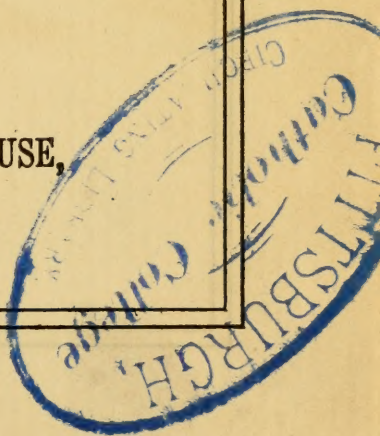
BY
GERALD GRIFFIN,

Author of "The Collegians," "Tales of the Munster Festivals," "The
Aylmers of Ballyaylmer, Etc.," "The Rivals," & "Tracy's Ambition,"
"Tales of the Jury Room," "The Duke of Monmouth,"
"Tales of the Five Senses," & "Night at Sea," "The
Poetical Works," & "Tragedy of Gisippus,"
"Life of Gerald Griffin."

"One foot on sea, and one on shore,
To one thing constant never."

SHAKESPEARE.

NEW YORK:
P. J. KENEDY,
EXCELSIOR PUBLISHING HOUSE,
5 BARCLAY STREET,
1896.



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FICTION
Griffin, G
I5

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1885.

PREFACE

TO THE

AMERICAN EDITION.

The publisher of the American Edition of the works of GERALD GRIFFIN is happy to be able to complete it by the great Irish historical tale, THE INVASION—thus making it the first and only complete edition of the works of the most admirable of Irish fiction writers, THE INVASION not being included in either the Dublin or London editions.

To none of his works did GERALD GRIFFIN devote more care and time, than to THE INVASION. Before entering upon it, he spent a considerable time in preparing himself for his proposed task, and the antiquarian treasures of the Dublin and London Institutions were consulted and studied, long and carefully. In this tale, therefore, is united to the charms of fiction, the interest of valuable information, regarding the manners and customs of the ancient Irish, the North-

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men, and Anglo-Saxons ; their laws and systems of government ; their military organization, dress, weapons, musical instruments, the Druidical rites, &c. In its pages is also interwoven, in a highly attractive form, a compendium of the Scandinavian mythology. Thus while the author enlists the attention of the reader, by the adventures of his personages, he gives him an excellent historical lesson by making them act in accordance with the spirit of their respective nations, by dressing them with scrupulous care in the garb of their time and country. A distinguished Irish poet and essayist, the late THOMAS DAVIS, thus speaks of the work :—" There is in it the most exquisite beauty of scene and form, the purest loveliness, the most original heroism of any work we own, and it contains besides, invaluable and countless hints on the appearance of Ancient Ireland."

P. J. KENEDY.

NEW YORK, July, 1895.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

It would be dealing unjustly both by reader and author to suffer the former to take up these volumes under the idea that he is about to peruse a historical novel. That branch of literature has, within our own day, attained a rank in which, we are sensible, the present performance could not, for an instant, maintain its ground. To the absorbing interest excited by deep passion, dramatic dialogue, and highly wrought narrative, these volumes have not a pretension. Their most ambitious aim is that of presenting a correct picture of the surface of society in part of England, in Ireland, and in northern Europe, at an obscure period of the history of mankind; and offering at the same time a slight sketch of individual character in the two persons whose story forms the connecting feature of the work.

The accuracy which we have endeavoured to use in the delineation of manners could hardly be extended to the necessary historical allusions, for not only is the chronology of the period exceedingly confused, but many of the persons and events alluded to are so much a subject of antiquarian controversy, as to leave their very existence problematical. This remark refers particularly to the scene of the *Réidic na Riogh*, or the Sepulchre of Kings, which, as the observant reader will immediately perceive, has been introduced, not with the view of assuming the authenticity of those works in which the reigns of the different monarchs are recorded, but for the purpose of presenting a general sketch of the early progress of the isle in the arts of war and peace. With respect to the time

embraced by the work itself, we may aver, without fear of any antiquary's censure, that there is no historical event introduced into the narrative which did not at least occur within a few years of the period to which it is referred; and this, considering the remoteness of the time, may be deemed sufficient for a work of fiction.

There is another class of readers to whom likewise some apology may be due, for the absence of many venerable attractions which they have been accustomed to meet in those works of imagination whose authors have already chosen to treat of the manners of the middle ages: "*ces tems*," says the accomplished Sismondi, "*que le plus grand historien de nos jours a appelés le siècles du mérite ignoré*." We allude to that numerous body, the sum of whose historical knowledge is derived from the circulating library and the minor theatre, and who will no doubt be surprised to meet, perhaps for the first time in a tale of the Carlovingian days, a chieftain whose limbs do not clank at every motion in a suit of Dr. Meyrick's genuine antiques; who seeks to improve his people by the arts of peace, and to strengthen their power by means somewhat more reputable than those of a Freney or O'Hanlon; a convent which does not in all points resemble an eccentric club, in which the public entrance is at least as much in request as the postern gate, and in which there is not even a hint of a subterranean passage; an abbot, whose *contour* is somewhat less than civic; monks who are not at all times absorbed in the joys of the larder and wine-cellar; hermits who have not all been crossed in love before they took the vows, and nuns who do not invariably listen to serenades at night, and elope with young light-horsemen. To such readers how will it excuse us that, in venturing to dispense with those long-established and inexhaustible sources of mirth and wit, we have endeavoured to substitute actual for fictitious manners, that from the form of a government to the shape of a mantle, we have sought to ground what we advance upon authentic sources; and

that, instead of presenting a romance of love, of magic, of highway-robbery, or of knight-errantry, we have endeavoured to lay before the reader a tale of real life of the middle ages—a task perhaps more arduous, as it is more new, than a work of purely imaginative character.

To those who, like the mechanical citizen in Zeluco, can only relish that to which they are *accustomed*, the very novelty, which many consider an attraction, may appear a disadvantage, and that which is strange as necessarily fictitious. It may thus happen, that in sacrificing effect for the sake of accuracy, we may lose credit even for the humble merit which we claim. To readers of this class we can only say, that from the really well-informed we fear nothing; from the ignorant everything. So far have we been from suffering any national predilections to influence the colouring of the scenes we endeavour to depict, that, in deference to the prepossessions of such readers, we have, generally speaking, subdued them to a standard far below the reality. Let such readers, therefore, before they undertake to censure, examine without prejudice the existing records of those days, and they will find that the truth is strange, stranger than our fiction.

Thus much we have thought it necessary to say, in order to provide against the consequences of critical disappointment in a performance, the materials of which have been collected with no small care and pains, though it is possible they have been used with little force or skill. It was necessary, in appearing at the bar of criticism, that our plea should be correctly understood, lest we might happen to be tried upon a charge which did not enter into the indictment. The tale offers little more, with regard to contrivance of plot or design, than the fictitious memoir of a native of England, of Ireland, and of Sweden, during those years which immediately preceded and followed the death of Charlemagne, whose fortunes, together with those of other incidental characters, are involved in the historical event which forms the catastrophe of the work, and from

which the tale derives its name. With respect to the event itself, some English chronicles mention a northern chief, named Gurmund, who landed on the Irish coasts, long ere the successful invasion of that isle by the Norwegian Thorgils; the Irish annalists likewise record an invasion previous to that of the Norwegian, on the western coasts of Munster, which was repelled by the promptitude of Artrigh, the monarch of Leath Mogha. This unsuccessful invasion constitutes the event on which the tale is founded, and finding no record of the name of its conductor, we have used that of Gurmund, leaving the authenticity of those portions of the English chronicles, in which his story is related, to the discussion of antiquaries. Some of the characters, such as Duach, Eogan Bel, Ferreis, Yrling, Ailred and his household, &c., are intended slightly to illustrate, in the bud, those national peculiarities which have since become more strikingly developed; while others, touched with a still lighter pencil, bear a more general relation to human nature.

And now, gentle critic, whether borne in the state carriage of a solemn quarterly, figuring in the elegant pages of a monthly magazine, or in the lighter columns of a weekly journal, we commit our volumes to your inspection with one parting charge; be just, but be candid. Do not, either from indolence or prejudice, decry what has been constructed with care and study, and remember that what is uninteresting to one class of readers, may be useful to another. If it appears to you, that we pause too long on questions of law and government, remember that there are Irish readers who may not regret to find embodied, in a work of imagination, a synopsis of the early constitution, and of the moral history of their native land, and who may regard with an interest more permanent, if not more exciting, than that which addresses itself to the passions, an attempt at tracing, to their remotest origin, some of the influences which have concurred in the formation of the national character.

THE INVASION.

CHAPTER I.

IN the reign of Niall Frosach, king of Ireland,* the second Ard-righ of that name, and of the Eremonian† line, there stood on the shores of Inbherisceine,‡ not far from the beautiful inlet of Glengariff, the dwelling of O'Haedha, the chief of that Ithian race. He had been contracted early in life to Macha, elder daughter of O'Driscoll, the Ceannfinny, or head of the family so named, which was another branch of the same Milesian stock.

The sun of a summer day had risen over the summit of Sliabh Eoghain, and the first breeze of morning had brushed the surface of the bay, when almost all the population of the sept of O'Haedha had assembled in the valley of Rath-Aedain. By the gay and eager faces of the multitude, and the frequent jests that passed from lip to lip, it might be judged that the occasion was a festive one. The gates of the Rath stood open, and were guarded by two lines of armed gallóglachs, who restrained the crowd, and kept an open space clear, as if for some expected cavalcade. The sound of the piob mala,§ a kind of droneless pipe, somewhat resembling the national instrument of the Scottish highlands, the fuller tone of the adharca ciuil, or musical horn, and other

* About A.D. 760. † See Note 1. The Eremonians. ‡ Bantry-Bay
§ See Note 2. Musical Instruments of Ancient Erin.

wind instruments, were heard from various recesses of the valley, and every sight and sound betokened the commencement of some splendid pageant.

At length, the long, loud note of a single galltropa from the Rath, produced an instant stillness through the multitude. It was succeeded by a sudden shout, so stunning and so universal, that the sea-fowl wheeled and screamed in startled flocks along the shore, and the echo muttered like thunder among the distant peaks of Sliabh Miscaisi.* All eyes were instantly turned on the open gateway. The double line of the course which the procession was expected to take, seemed as if walled on either side, with heads and necks stretched out, with gaping faces, and with staring eyes. Some ran in groups to the summits of surrounding eminences ; some scrambled to the roofs of the scattered shielings† and peillices‡ of the valley ; and mothers were seen holding their infants high above their heads, that the babes might look upon their chieftain, and behold the spectacle from which they were themselves shut out.

After a brief interval, the expected procession was seen to issue from the gateway, and was hailed with shouts more loud and stunning than before. First came a troop of fifty marcesluagh,§ or cavalry, headed by the Fear Comhlainn Caoguid, or lieutenant, and the standard-bearer, holding aloft the banner of the sept. Their shining cathbharrs and brazen-headed spears reflected in long and brilliant gleams the rays of the arising sun. Next came a carbud, highly adorned, and drawn by a pair of the high-spirited Asturcones, a native breed, remarkable for fleetness in the chase and ardour in the combat. The reins were held by O'Haedha (so named by way of emphasis),|| who sat alone in the chariot, in

* Now called Slieve Miskish.

† Cottages. ‡ Sheds.

§ See Note 3. Soldiers, and arms used by them in Ancient Erinn.

|| See Note 4. Clann names.

the bloom of manly beauty, and in all the magnificence of festal costume. The young chieftain wore on his head a barréad or bonnet,* edged with a band of gold, from under which his hair flowed over his neck and shoulders in abundant ringlets. The close-fitting triubhis, a kind of plaided hose, displayed the symmetry of his well-shaped limbs ; and a cochall, or short cloak, of a rich green colour, was bound upon his breast with a golden brooch. Beside him was an empty seat, ere long to be occupied by the chosen lady of the sept. The remembrance of his ancient lineage, the actions of his ancestry, and his own manly virtues, enkindled the enthusiasm of his people, when they saw him leave his dwelling on this festive occasion, and the shouts of " O'Haedha ! O'Haedha a-bo !"† arose like the roar of a tempestuous ocean from the vale. The chieftain smiled, and waved his hand in answer to the stormy greeting, and moved slowly on, like the commanding genius of the tumult, while his horses reared their heads, and shook the plumes in the golden headstalls of their bridles, as if they shared the general exultation.

Behind the chief rode one who did not meet the same devoted welcome from his assembled kinsmen. It was Baseg, the brother of the chief and thanist,‡ or legal heir to his title and power, though not to his possessions. He was a man of large person, but pale and ill-featured, and with a discontented cast of eye that almost bordered on melancholy. His dwelling was in a lonely hold near the foot of Gormadark ; but Canall, the chieftain, who loved him both on account of the natural bond, and for his dauntless valour in the field, prevailed on him to take apartments in the Rath, which he was now, however, determined to resign.

* See Note 5. Dress of a Chieftain.

† See Note 6. War-cries

‡ See Note 7. Thanists and Thanistry in Ancient Erin.

Next came, on horseback, with a face of deep solemnity and wisdom, Finnghein,* the hereditary physician of the tribe, a man of middle age, followed by three daltadhs, or pupils, each of whom strove to emulate with all his might the grave and potent aspect of his master. They were followed by the Brehon, or lawyer of the sept,† a man proficient in all the laws of life and property, megbote, manbote, and fredun, thanistry, gravel-kind, mustertowne, south, assault, bode, garty, ceann, byenge, slanciagh, sreath, and a thousand other details of the ancient code of Inisfail. Beside him rode Fearchorb, the shenachie, a man of powerful memory, who could trace the genealogy of the sept, in all its numerous branches, not only up to Ith, the great Milesian ancestor, but from him, in the clearest manner, to Adam, the father of the human race. Next came, with pleasant countenance and quiet, observing eye, the dresbdeartach, or story-teller, rich in legends of Cuchalann, and the race of Irish giants,‡ fairies, and the Fianna Eireann, the heroes of Irish chivalry and romance. He was followed by Connla, the filé,§ or poet, whose duty it was to attend his chieftain at the festival, on the march, and even in the field of battle; to cheer him at evening with songs in praise of his ancestry; to animate him in the combat by recalling their achievements in his verse; and to sing the caoin, or death-song, at his burial. None was more profoundly skilled than Connla in the hundred modes of verses invented by the Irish bards, or deeper in the mysteries of the *Uraiceacht na Neigios*, or rules for the poet, invented by the bard Fercheitne. Besides the son of song, and dressed like him in a robe of white, rode the cruitiré, whose clairseach, or harp, suspended from his neck in front, gave indication of his popular calling.

* See Note 8. Finnghein, the physician.

† See Note 9. Brehon learning. ‡ See Note 10. Giants.

§ See Note 11. The order of poets or philosophers in Ancient Erin.

Few merited better than old Diarmaid and his companion the praise which was already given to Irish minstrelsy, nor can we deny the isle its tuneful eminence, when we remember that even earlier than Connla's day, the royal benefactress of the abbey of Neville in France, supplied its choir from those of Inisfail; that its poetry captivated the fancy of a Spenser; and its music drew eloquent applause from the prejudiced lips of a Cambrensis. The minstrels were followed by a few tiarnas, or subordinate governors of townships under the chieftain, and toiseachs, or leaders of his military force. The procession was closed by a troop of fifty hobbelers, or light horse, whose weapons were the brazen-headed javelin, a small bow,* not more than three-quarters of a yard in length, bent with a hempen string, and a quiver of arrows with heads as slender and almost as sharp as a lancet. By every horseman ran a daltin, dressed in a saffron cota,† and armed with a dart; their duty it was to attend to the comforts of the animal, and at times to join the combat.

Having left the valley amid the prolonged and reiterated shouts of the united sept, the gay procession directed its course southward, and arrived ere noon on the shores of the little promontory of Aghadown.‡ The Isles of Inis Arcain,§ and Inis-i-Driscoll, lay on either hand, their woody shores reflected in the tranquil waters, and further out at sea appeared the sunlit hills of Cleir, where stood the principal dwelling of O'Driscoll. A horseman, standing on the shore, blew a long blast at the command of his chieftain on the trompa: it was echoed far along the shore and over the calm ocean, which soon was covered at a distance by a fleet of

* See Note 3.

† See Note 42 and 5.

‡ Also near Skibbereen, County Cork.

§ Now called Shearkin (see Glossary).

curachs*, coities noevógs, and those small floating cribs invented by Eochaidh Uarcheas, for the purpose of landing his troops on stormy and rock-bound coasts. They were manned by hardy fishermen of the sept of O'Driscol, gayly dressed for the occasion, and dipping their oars to the sound of the pipe, the corn-bean, and the fideóg. In the foremost of these festal barges, O'Haedha recognized the figure of O'Driscol Oge, the warlike and accomplished son of the old Ceannfinny. He sprung on shore almost at the same instant that O'Haedha alighted from his carbud, and they met with cordial and delighted looks. O'Driscol Oge, or, as he was more generally named from an unusual length of arm, Sior-Lamb, after rallying the bridegroom on the paleness of his countenance, admitted that he showed more ardour in his movements than his aspect, for none of the expected guests had yet arrived in the island. Before he entered the little barge, O'Haedha handed to the lieutenants a pouch of silver scrupalls (a small coin of the island) to distribute amongst the men, with orders to take back the chariot and the horses of the bridal party, and to celebrate the nuptials at Rath-Aedain, with the great body of the sept.

They put off from shore, and were received with open welcome at the gates of Cleir by the venerable Ceannfinny and his white-haired spouse, who were arrayed in such attire as became their rank, their years, and the occasion. Their chieftain wore around his neck the golden *fleasy*, or torques, which announced his claim to the title of Ridairé, or knight.† It was an ornament similar to that used by the Gaulish equites of the period, and which obtained for Manlius Torquatus his memorable agnomen. The aged lady of the sept wore on her head a kind of turban of the finest linen, from which her long

* See Note 51. Boats.

† See Note 3.

white hair hung down in plaited wreaths, and her person, tall and stately, notwithstanding her great age, had an air of dignity, the effect of high descent, and of habitual command, such as we might imagine of Volumnia. Around this venerable pair stood a crowd of blooming children from the age of sixteen to eight, of both sexes, and all partaking of that princely air which sat so easy on the aged parents, and which was unmingled with the slightest taint of pride. The elder sisters were yet retired with Macha, the bride, in an inner apartment, to which O'Haedha was conducted by her brother soon after his arrival.

In the course of the day the shores of the islet were crowded by the other leading members of the various Ithian* septs. O'Baire, O'Ciarain, Mac Crothian, O'Breogain, O'Flainn of Arda, O'Ciarmaic, O'Deidé, Mac Craith, O'Cuffy, O'Leary, O'Ceily, and other chiefs of the race, displayed their banners in honour of the occasion, from the earthen ramparts of the Ceannfinny's hold. To these, in friendly alliance, were added the dreaded banners of the race of the unhappy Eogan,† whose descendants ruled that portion of Deas Mumhain‡ which was not in the possession of the Ithians. Mac Carthy More, O'Sullivan, O'Donoghue of the Glens, the lord of fair Loch Lene,§ O'Conaill, O'Mahonie, Mac Auliffe, and other Eoganacht chiefs, too numerous to name. From far and near, great princes and nobility were met to honour the espousals, and (according to a custom then prevalent in Ireland, as it was amongst the Franks and Germans) to make their splendid offerings to the bride.

The ceremony was performed by the bishop of Ross Ailithir,|| himself an Ithian, and one of the twelve suffra-

* See Note 12. The Ithian Clanns.

† See Note 13. The Eoganacht Clanns.

‡ South Munster, afterwards Denmark. § Killarney.

| Rom.

gan dignitaries under the sea of Caisiol.* The bride having received the marriage dowry from her husband, was with grief resigned to his care by the god Ceannfinny.

"I part with thee," he said, "as with a score of the years yet left me. May you be long-lived, happy, and prosperous. May your hall be ever full, and your cairn be like a mountain when you die."

The guests soon after came forward with their offerings. O'Sullivan presented to the bride a cross of emeralds, a pair of topaz armlets, a mantle of the richest crimson dye that the moss of Deas Mumhain could furnish, and bound at the shoulder by an amethyst set in gold. The Chieftain of the Glens added to these a ring set with one of the finest pearls that had been ever found in the waters of Lough Lene,† and bracelets adorned with the glittering crystals of Ciar.‡ The chieftain of the Reeks made his offering of a pair of buskins of the red deer hide, together with four milk-white hobbies, reared in the steep recesses of the Coom Coillidh ; and other guests contributed their portions of the marriage dowry according to their wealth and inclination.

Seated in rings through the extensive building, on beds of rushes, the company of higher rank partook of the festive fare that was prepared for their refreshment. Before them were placed a number of three-legged tables, covered with food of various kinds, bread baked on a griddle, milk-meats in sundry forms, the many species of fish and flesh which the coasts, the hills, and woods of Dairinne could afford, among which might be mentioned as the most delicious, the smelt, the gourder, and the cock of the wood. Attendants, in the meantime, handed round beverages of various kinds in vessels more or less costly, according to the quality of the guests. While the Ceannfinny drank his wine in a cup of gold or silver,

* Cashel.

† Killarney.

‡ Kerry.

the lesser chieftain was content to receive his curmi, a kind of ale, in a vessel of horn or brass. The miodh, a drink resembling the English mead, and the mil-fionn, a simple beverage of diluted honey, was circulated among the kernes and gallóglachs in cups of ash or sycamore.

The harp, the song, the dance,* gave animation to the scene of pleasure. The sun had sunk beyond the western ocean, and rushen torches of prodigious size supplied the absence of his light. The youths and maidens of the surrounding septs glided gracefully through all the tortuous mazes of the national dance, the venerable *rinnceadh fada*. The cruitirés, in a corner of the spacious building, delighted the assembly by a harmonious concert of instruments, of which the names alone have reached the ears of their descendants. The mighty clairsech† resounded beneath the shrivelled but nimble fingers of a gray-haired minstrel; the crotalum, a little bell of silver, tingled in the hand of a fair-faced boy; the warbling cruit, an instrument between the harp and the lute, poured forth its sweet but shrilly symphony; the many-stringed kiernine gave echo to the flying fingers of a white-robed musician; the golden crotalin, or cymbal, flew gleaming with a noisy melody around the head and person of a youthful bard; here rolled the tiompán, or kettle-drum, there rose the tenor of the cionán, or ten-stringed violin, while the deep-toned murmur of the cream-thine added its harmonious bass to the merry measure of the *geantraighe*, the festive mode which the minstrels had selected for the bridal eve.

On the green without the building the kernes and gallóglachs, the neighbouring fuidirs, or cottagers, and other guests, old and young, of both sexes, and of humbler rank, pursued their mirth with greater freedom, though with lesser splendour, and danced as merrily

* See Note 14. Dances.

† See Note 2.

though to the sound of coarser minstrelsy. The rising moon gave light to their festivity, and the chorus of wind instruments (the horror of the fine-eared cruitiré and educated harpers) inspired their vigorous movements. The wild stoc sent its blast over the tranquil waters ; the winding adharca ciuil, a kind of hautboy, awoke the echoes of the shore ; the shrill piob mala, or droneless bagpipe, contributed its monotonous treble ; the dudog, the lonloingean, the adharc, the cuisle ciuil,* the fideog, the corn-bean, and other instruments of wind music, some played with the redán, or mouth-piece, and some without, all joined in loud and mirthful chorus, resounding far away among the hills and through the breathless woods.

Late at night, when the dancers made a pause, the aged ardfilé, or chief bard of the sept of O'Driscoll, was invited to fill up the interval in the evening's pleasures. Taking a sweet-toned cruit, the principal cruitiré prepared to accompany him in his song. The bard chose for his subject the ancient achievements of the stock from which they were descended. He sang of the invasion of Ith, and of the unhappy fate of that adventurer ; of the treacherous hospitality of the three sons of Cearmada ; of the fearful retaliation of his Galician brethren ; and of the subsequent achievements of the sons of the murdered Milesian. He then changed the style of his eulogy, and in a voice and language of the most expressive sweetness, described the recent progress of the isle in the arts of peace, of science, and of industry. The fame, he said, of the chiefs of Inisfail, in order to be immortal, no longer needed to be enrolled in characters of blood ; virtue, and not power, had become the object of their emulation. Their glory not diminished, their honour still unstained, the spirit of arms not quenched but purified in its motive, they had begun to prefer independence to dominion, and charity to discord.

* See Note 2

CHAPTER. II.

THERE was a chieftain present who did not join in the praises that were bestowed on the song of the filé, nor in the gifts which he received from the assembled chiefs. It had also been observed that he did not kneel with the guests during the short prayer which they offered up immediately after the conclusion of the marriage ceremony, nor add his voice to the general response at its termination. To those who inquired into the cause of this singularity it was intimated that the stranger was neither an Eoganacht* nor Ithian,† but the chieftain of the Hooded People,‡ a Druid race, so named from a singular costume adopted from their brethren of Connacht, who still preserved among the mountains in the interior of the country, their ancient rites and customs, and that he acted both as their civil governor and Ard-Drai, or chief Druid. This was a sufficient explanation of what would otherwise have excited high and indignant feelings ; but O'Haedha, the groom, who was naturally warm-tempered, did not esteem it a good reason for the slight thus offered to O'Driscol's bard.

"The Ard-Drai," said he, "does not deem the filea's song worth his praise. He has better harping in the Coom nan Druadh."

"The voice is good, and the harping too," replied the Druid chief. "The Christian boasts a little ; that is all."

O'Haedha unfortunately afforded a proof that the Ard-Drai's words were just. He entered into an altercation with the latter, which, but for the interposition of the bishop of Ross Ailithir, and the Ceannfinny himself, would have ended, even on the spot, in mortal combat.

* See Note 13.

† See Note 12.

‡ See Note 15. The Druids. "Hooded People."

As it was, high taunts were uttered, and high menaces exchanged, and the wrath of the Druid was inflamed to the highest by a stinging allusion made by O'Haedha to the descent of the former from Cinnselach of the Shameful Head, a warrior who had dishonoured his name and arms by killing a bard on the field of battle.

"Thy people," said the Ard-Drai, "will never be content. They have driven us from Teamair; they have driven us from Cruachain; and they envy us our lonely retreat among the hills. Our power is gone, and they would take our name and fame along with it. But let them look to it. If the fire of Bel no longer burn upon the altars of Tlachta, it is still unquenched; and the time may come when the votaries of bright Samhuin* may worship by her light once more within the groves of Uisneach. The chiefs whose praise the bard has sung so well were Ithians, it is true, but they were fire adorers too, and would have blushed to share the sluggish praise of their posterity. But fare thee well, proud chieftain, thou hast taunted me with the blemish of my blood. See that the current of thine own flows undisturbed."

He departed from the festival, not heeding, or not hearing, an attempt at explanation made by the hasty bridegroom. The unpleasant interruption to the festivities of the evening was soon forgotten, and the bridal concluded, as it had begun, in mirth and in good-will.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY on a misty morning, in the following month, the herdsman of O'Driscoll was seen with his assistants driving home the *calp-an-spreidh*, or marriage cattle, the

* See Note 15.

only dowry* which the bride was in any case expected to bring to her husband. They were followed, at no long interval, by the new-married chieftain and his spouse, attended by the united splendour of either sept. Months rolled away in peace and happiness, as perfect, perhaps, as earth can offer to the most blest of its inhabitants. It was interrupted before the year had ended by a sudden and a fearful accident.

O'Haedha was seated in front of his dwelling, receiving the tributes of the various holders of his territory in money and in kind. A tiarna, or ruler of a township, handed in his yearly bag of silver bonns.† A frank tenant paid his quarterly sorohen, or soldier tax, in quireens of butter, and in scrones of oatmeal. One carried on his back a crannóg, or hamper lined with sheepskin, in which was contained the grain of seven score sheaves of wheat, and a woman followed, bearing on her head a meadar, a four-cornered pitcher, hollowed from the trunk of a single sycamore, and containing several gallons of tributary ale, or cuirm.

Suddenly the sound of the buabhall,‡ an alarm trumpet of prodigious size, from a neighbouring eminence aroused the chieftain from his tranquil occupation. He looked up, and beheld a horseman galloping towards the Rath, to let him know that hostile spears were seen upon the border, and that the smoke of one or two shielings already arose into the air. Snatching his spear, his shield, and his cathbharr, or helmet, and bidding the people of the Rath not to alarm his wife, the chieftain vaulted on his steed, and galloped away in the direction of the invaders, with such bodies of horse and foot as, summoned by the blast of the buabhall, either joined or overtook him on the way.

Notwithstanding his caution, young Macha heard the

* See Note 16. Spre : Dowry.

† Groats.

‡ See Note 2.

din, and came forth upon the ramparts. While she sat in emotion strongly controlled, awaiting the return of her lord, and listening with a throbbing heart to the distant sounds of conflict, a horseman well accoutred, but looking pale and anxious, appeared at the entrance of the Rath, and seemed to inquire into the causes of the tumult. Macha started on beholding him.

"Haste, Baseg, haste," she said, waving her hand with a gesture of eager exhortation. "They are on the borders, and O'Haedha is already in the strife. To the hills, brave Baseg, and assist thy kinsman!"

The thanist, for it was the same of whom we have already spoken, gave the rein to his horse, and was quickly out of sight. Some time passed away, and a daltin came running back to say that the hostile party were a band of the Hooded People of the Hills, the Druid sept over which the chief presided whom Conall had offended at the feast. A second came to say that they were routed. A third, to tell that Baseg and the chief, outstripping all their men, pursued the Druid leader through the Glen of Oaks. There was now a long interval of keen suspense and of anxiety. The next messenger appeared with grief and wild dismay upon his countenance. The chieftain of Rath Aedain had perished. Returning from the pursuit which the fugitives, better skilled in the intricacies of the mountain pass, had rendered fruitless, he had received a blow on the head from the brazen ball of a crann-tabhaill, or sling, which occasioned instant death; and, in a few seconds afterwards, the hostile Ard-Drai was seen turning at full speed a jutting crag at some distance, and shaking his hand in defiance at the Ithian group who were employed in assisting their fallen leader. The effect of this disastrous stroke, the first that had disturbed their married life, upon the mind of Macha, was as forcible as it was sudden. She was conveyed in a state of unconsciousness to

her apartment, and became in the same day a widow and a mother.

Baseg, the thanist, who had been pursuing the foe in another direction, and was not with his brother when he fell, overtook the mourning group as they bore his lifeless body towards the Rath, upon their wicker shields.* The thanist, though brave in action, was not popular in his sept. He was, however, now the eldest chief of the immediate family of his name, and consequently the legal inheritor of the title and power of the perished Conall, even to the exclusion of the new-born heir to his possessions. The sept, however, did not receive his claim without murmuring. They remembered that, impatient of his expectant, and in some degree dependent, condition, Baseg had been detected more than once in the practice of contrivances against his kinsman's life; and it was generally suspected that he did not regret the chance which removed from his way an obstacle which he could not himself surmount. It was true, that Conall, with a national mixture of apathy and affection, not only could not be prevailed on at any time to put justice in force against his kinsman, but did not even turn his experience to advantage by taking the slightest precautions for his own security.

Macha, who had heard nothing of these rumours during the lifetime of her husband, was horror-struck when first they reached her ear. Alarmed at the dissensions by which the people were distracted, she proposed, however, with an acuteness which was at once acknowledged, that Baseg should for his former attempts upon his kinsman's life, deliver himself up to the legal justice of his country. If he were acquitted, his claim would be without objection; if otherwise, the succession would pass in its lineal course to the infant Elim.

* See Note 3.

Baseg refused his assent to these conditions, and the sept rejected his demands to be considered as their chief. He complained in bitter terms of the injustice ; but, after an ineffectual attempt to force his wishes, was obliged to fly the territory, and even lost his own small holding on the lands. To these deep injuries was added, it was said, the recollection of a disappointment of another kind, for Conall, many secretly believed, had been, unknowingly the successful rival of the thanist in his suit to Macha. To the astonishment of all, the exiled Baseg turned his steps in the direction of the sept of the Ard-Drai, the reputed slayer of his kinsman, by whom he was received, in their secluded mountain hold, with ready welcome. Resentment it was hardly thought could carry any one so far ; and it was now asserted with confidence that the slayer of the departed chieftain must have acted under the connivance, at least, if not the instigation, of the thanist. The latter, meanwhile, remained amongst his hooded friends, and, by his untiring instances, so far prevailed on their chief (whose native prejudices and love of quarrel were then inflamed by the recent apostasy of a brother), that he undertook the task of reinstating him by force of arms in what he represented as his rightful inheritance. To confirm the mountaineers in his interest, Baseg studied their habits, familiarized himself with their manners, and publicly adopted their belief. The efforts of these new allies, however, were not more successful than his own had been. The Hooded People were discomfited with dreadful loss, and, without serving Baseg, brought infinite calamities on themselves. They were in the end obliged to purchase peace, by excluding the obnoxious Ithian from their dominions, a step to which they compelled their chieftain to accede. Forsaken by his new allies as well as by his former friends, the miserable Baseg soon after disappeared from the neighbourhood of either sept, after declaring his determination to be

avenged of the unjust usurpers of his inheritance, and was at length forgotten on his native soil. The Ard-Drai, likewise struck with remorse for the miseries which this unhappy contest had brought upon his people, abated something of his zeal for arms, and gave himself to habits of greater tranquillity. The prudence and firmness of Macha, assisted by the experience of O'Driscoll, succeeded in preserving the fidelity of the sept to her son Elim, and afterwards in maintaining its subordination, and even its warlike character.

Such were the stormy circumstances that preceded and ushered in the birth of the young Ithian chief, the hero of our tale.

CHAPTER IV.

Soon after the re-establishment of peace, a day was appointed for conferring on the infant O'Haedha the name which he afterwards distinguished by his virtues. Macha only waited the return of health to convey the child to Ross Ailithir, near the southern coast, where St. Fachtna, a few centuries before, had founded an academy, ere long to be the centre of a flourishing town.

Before noon on the appointed day, the townsmen were surprised by an unusual spectacle. At the northern gate appeared a party of marcsluadh, preceding a carbad drawn by a pair of milk-white hobbies, which were led by two fleet-footed daltins, and in which sat Macha dressed in a cloak of crimson bound with a golden fibula upon her bosom, while the infant chieftain rested in her arms. Her hair was no longer tied up, as at her bridal, with azure fillets, and fastened on the crown with a golden bodkin, but hung plaited, in matron fashion, from beneath the snowy folds of a turbaned head-dress. Her sister Melcha, veiled in the manner of unwedded females,

occupied the seat beside her. The venerable O'Driscol and his spouse came after in a second carbud, and the Sior-Lamh brought up the rear on horseback with a body of the well-accountred hobbblers of Dairinne.*

O'Driscol and his venerable helpmate had both declined the office of answering for the young Ithian at the baptismal font. The circle of life, they said, for them was almost closed, nor was it likely they should live to execute the duties to which they would be pledged by such a ceremony. The dignity of sponsors was therefore transferred to the Sior-Lamh and to his sister Melcha. Holding the infant in their arms before the marble font, they answered for the child that he would lead a virtuous life, and made themselves reponsible for his fidelity to the contract, so far as their exertions could avail. The ceremony ended, young Elim was placed once more in the arms of Macha, and the party prepared to return to Inbhersceine in the same order in which it came.

While Macha prepared to reascend the carbud, a Danaan ceannuighe, or merchant, who had long paid tribute to her father, approached, and found an opportunity of letting her know that Baseg lingered still among the sea-ports of Dairinne, and that he had been heard to intimate a determination to make some attempt upon the person of the child. Macha, who well knew the ferocious obstinacy of his disposition, laid up the warning in her mind, not doubting that the thanist would be glad to possess himself of so desirable a hostage for enforcing on the sept a compliance with his demands.

On its approach to Rath-Aedain, where it was intended that the occasion should be celebrated by a joyous festival, the cavalcade was increased to a prodigious extent by the addition of numerous groups of the surrounding families on horseback and on foot. One of

* Carbery.

those new comers, as the procession reached the entrance of the valley, was observed to turn aside from the rest, and take the way which led to the lonely inlet of Glengariff. It was Clothra, the wife of a neighbouring Flaith, a person in some authority, and holding land under O'Haedha, for which he paid in service and in kind. She rode a small dark mongrel hobbie, which was led by her son Moyel, a fair-faced youth of little more than a dozen years. Directing her course through the crag and woodland of Glengariff, she passed from beneath the branches of a pathway closely embowered into an open space before a building of moderate extent. A lofty screen of ash, oak, hazel, the tree called Indian pine, witch elm, and other tenants of the forest, enclosed the green nearly on all sides, leaving open that alone which commanded a view of the beautiful bay, with the island, at that time garrisoned only by some wandering kine, but from which at present a Martello tower frowns sternly down upon the scene of beauty.

The song of the wood-lark, which, like the cuckoo, warbled on the wing, and the varied strain of the song thrush, gave additional sweetness to the beautiful retreat, and the view of a fishing currach in the bay, abounding in former times with pilchard, plaice, and gurnet, gave corresponding interest to the sea-ward scene. One circumstance alone appeared not in accordance with the place. It was a row of bare ash-stumps, newly cut, which, as Clothra well remembered, had formed a desirable screen on the water side of the building, and for which its owner had a particular regard.

Before the wooden dwelling, on which the noon-tide sun shone down at present with an oppressive splendour, three figures sat motionless upon the grass, their solemn visages presenting a monumental contrast to the verdure with which they were surrounded. They were the same who had followed the physician as his daltadhs in the

bridal procession, and they now seemed occupied in watching some simples which were drying in the sunshine. Passing these solemn disciples of Esculapius, Clothra advanced to the entrance of the dwelling, and committing the hobbie to the care of Moyel, made bold to enter with the usual benediction. She found the man of medicine surrounded by the customary paraphernalia of his science, and attired in his dark filléad barréad and ring. His countenance appeared complexed and indignant, and his eyes were fixed with much interest upon the brebon, or lawyer, who sat upon a tripod opposite, contemplating with deliberate scrutiny a broad roll of parchment which was displayed before him. In a corner by the ample fire-place sat Meibhe, wife to Finnghin, brewing some mixtures in a copper cauldron, over a low and flameless fire. She was useful to her husband not only in his household and in preparing his receipts, but acted in his place amongst the neighbouring families, at those times when Lucina, and not Esculapius, was the power to be invoked. Beckoning Clothra to her side, and bestowing on her the "cead failté," or "hundred welcomes," which Finnghin was too much occupied to give, she let the former understand that the Faith-liaigh, meaning the learned and skilful,* for such was the title which her husband bore in the sept, was sorely annoyed at an accident which had occurred that morning. On walking out to enjoy the fresh morning breeze, which was his custom after rising, he discovered with dismay that a row of his fine ashes had been cut by some youths of the neighbourhood, for the purpose of forming arches to celebrate the christening of their young chieftain. It happened a short time before that the brehon, Mac Firbis, arrived at the dwelling, in order to consult the Faith-liaigh with regard to a con-

* See Note 8.

stitutional ailment, and the latter was now indemnifying himself for his advice by obtaining that of the brehon with respect to the trespass which had been committed.

The expounder of the law, having slowly folded up his great manuscript, remained for some time deliberating the matter in his mind, and then laid down the case to his client in a solemn manner, extending one hand and touching it occasionally with the roll of parchment as he spoke, as one beats time to music.

"Learned and dexterous enemy of disease," said he, "I see not how thou canst be indemnified for this disaster. By the code of Roighne, named Rosgadhach, or the learned in song, son of Ugainé the Great, as well as by the Breatha Neimhe, or Celestial judgments* of the Ollamhs, Fercheirtne, Neidhe, and Athairni, the only trees protected under the laws of Inisfail, are of four classes, or kinds ; the *airigh*, or royal timber, comprising the oak, the hazel, the holly, the yew, the pine, and the apple ; the *athaigh* wood, embracing the alder, willow, hawthorn, quick-beam, birch, and the witch-hazel ; the *fogladh* wood, comprehending the blackthorn, elder, spindle-tree, white-hazel, and the quivering-aspen ; and, to conclude, the *losa*, or shrubs, including fern, furze, briar, heath, ivy, reeds, and thorn-bush. Under none of which heads do I find mention made of the ash, which seems to have been the sufferer in the case before us."

The man of medicine received this announcement with chagrin. He arose from his seat, and walking toward the open entrance, said in a harsh tone :

"It is not them I blame, nor their dishonest meritment. It is you," he added, shaking his clenched hand at the three daltadhs who gazed on one another as he spoke, with looks of deeper solemnity than ever : "Unworthy disciples of an art whose foundation stone is vigi-

* See Note 49.

lance, is it by negligence like this you hope to rival the celebrity of our great ancestor, who saved the life of king Connor of Uladh, by making the grand discovery that the skull of man may be penetrated without injury to the brain? Ah, but the monarch's head was more penetrable than yours!"

The brehon having received his medicine, took his departure, and Clothra unfolded the object of her visit, which was that the Faith-liaigh might recommend her to Macha as a fosterer to the infant chief, in consideration of which dignity she empowered him to say that she was willing to add a hundred sheep to the flocks that browsed in the valley of Rath-Aedain. Her proposal was communicated, and accepted, less for its liberality than for her gentle character.

In three years after this arrangement had been made, Clothra was seated at evening in the open door of her peillice, which looked upon the bay, when a curach approached the shore, and a stranger, having the appearance of a merchant, landed and approached the dwelling. He greeted Clothra and inquired for Moyel, her husband, who he understood had got some of those beautiful gerfalcons which were indigenous only to Inisfail and *Fuar Lochloinn. Clothra, who knew her husband had the birds, arose, and requesting the stranger to look to Elim, who was playing on the ground at her feet, made haste to seek him. Scarcely, however, had she lost sight of the child, when a sudden feeling of distrust awoke in her mind, and she hurried back, accusing herself of an act of imprudence. She found the stranger already moving toward the shore, with Elim laughing and exulting in his arms. He restored the infant, with an expression of countenance which Clothra could not penetrate; and, refusing to wait for the completion of his business, pushed

* Norway.

quickly off from shore and disappeared. The woman feared to communicate the circumstance to Macha, but from the whole conduct of the stranger, and something inexplicable in his demeanour that seemed to indicate suppressed anxiety, she made no doubt that the whole proceeding was an attempt to obtain possession of the infant. Incapable, however, of preserving so important a matter in her own mind, she mentioned the circumstance to her husband, who was not long in laying it before the widowed mother. Thenceforward Clothra was not permitted to convey the child without the precincts of the Rath.

Almost from his infancy, young Elim gave indications of a generous nature, and of that constancy of temper, the reverse of obstinacy, which, if it be not virtue, is one of its most distinguished qualities. Strong in thought, quick and tender in affection, and cheerful and sweet in manner, his very childhood seemed to the whole sept to give promise of future good government. In the mean time his little frame was not neglected. O'Driscoll Oge, who assisted Macha in her government, took a pleasure in teaching him the ordinary field exercises, while Melcha instructed him at morn and evening in the rudiments of his religious duties. Before he had reached his tenth year, he knew how to rein a hobbie, to drive a carbad two in hand, to whirl the cram tabhaill, to dart the javelin, to wield the biall with force and precision, and to use the gen and sciath with dexterity.

An incident occurred about this period, which, as it affords a glimpse into the character of both mother and son, may be here inserted with advantage to our history.

In the course of acquiring the accomplishments above enumerated, Elim was necessarily much without the circle of his mother's observation. One morning, observing him alone on the platform of the Rath, she went out to enjoy the pleasure of sitting in the shade, and observing his amusements. Elim was too closely occupied to per-

ceive her approaching. He was engaged at the instant in shooting at a leathern target, with one of those small Scythian bows* which, in succeeding ages, were found so galling to the harnessed soldiers of Plantagenet. He seemed so much absorbed in his amusement that his mother paused a moment, unwilling to disturb him.

"There's Curaoi, the Ard-Drai!" he exclaimed, as he shot an arrow at the target, not supposing that he was overheard. "No; it is in the outer ring, 'tis but a hooded kern. There's Curaoi!" (as he shot another); "no;—'tis quite a miss.—Ha! there's a galloglach! And there's a toiseach in the second ring. Now for the Ard-Drai! Thou hooded chief, why didst thou murder Conall? Take that! No! no! Fairé! fairé! O'Haedha a-bo! 'Tis in the centre of the field! 'Tis Baseg!"

In the height of his exultation, happening to catch his mother's eye, he made a sudden pause and lowered his bow with a bashful air.

"Come hither, Elim," said Macha, beckoning the young archer to her side. "At whom hast thou been shooting?"

"At the Hooded People," answered Elim.

"And why, my child?"

"Because Moyel told me that their chieftain killed my father."

"And thou fanciedst to thyself, when thou hadst shot thine arrow, that it struck the Ard-Drai of the Hooded People?"

"No, no!" said Elim, "I aimed at the Ard-Drai, but I shot the thanist, Baseg. I placed him in the centre, for he deserves it more than Curaoi."

"Well, hear me, now, my boy. If thou livest until thou art as old as the senachie," said Macha, fixing her eye reprovingly, yet affectionately on his, and raising a finger with an air of admonition, "let me never hear

* See Note 3.

thee utter words like these again. The Hooded People are our friends. My dear boy," she continued, taking him into her lap, and pressing him tenderly to her bosom, "I cannot too soon impress it on thee that the Hooded People were not in truth the slayers of thy father, and the destroyers of all my hopes of earthly happiness. It is the miserable spirit of disunion which exists among the princes of our isle, that has truly wrought our ruin. If thou shouldst live to be a man, my boy, exert thyself to make thy countrymen united, and thou wilt do better than by taking solitary vengeance on the Hooded People."

So saying, she again embraced her child with tenderness, and retired to her apartment. Elim, who was surprised at her emotion, brooded deeply on her words, while he proceeded with his sport in silence. The incident led Macha to consider on the means of procuring her child an education. There was no alternative but that of leaving him ignorant, or parting with him during the period of his instruction. After some keen deliberation with herself, she at length resolved to leave him at Muinghairid,* a famous abbey on the shores of the Sionainn,† and the superior of which was a relative of her own, until he should become proficient in the knowledge of his duties, and the learning of the day. The unprotected condition of the sept rendered it impossible for her to be his companion on the way. She determined therefore to commit the precious charge to the guardianship of her brother O'Driscoll, and the escort of a troop of horse. When all was ready, on the eve of his departure, she went herself to announce the resolution to her son. She found him, as before, occupied on the platform in what seemed his favourite amusement. His arrows flew as nimbly as before, but the quarry was of inferior head.

* Mungret.

† Shannon.

"Now for the osprey!" she heard him say, as he raised the bended weapon to his eye; "is he hit? 'Tis but a puttock! Come, again! Now for him! Ha! there goes a heron winged! Again, Fairé! The osprey has it fast."

Smiling at the alteration, Macha summoned the boy into her own apartment, and acquainted him with the projected journey. The grief of Elim was keen, and his feelings amounted to dismay when he was given to understand that his free and sportive seaside life must be exchanged for the retirement and discipline of a convent. The remainder of the day was spent in taking a long leave of his old friends and favourite amusements. He made Connla, the old filé, sing all his songs, and tired the harpstrings of the crotarie. He visited Clothra at her cottage, and resigned his puny arms to Moyel's keeping. In the morning, arising from a sleepless bed, he was summoned to his mother's room, where he received her parting counsel, and her benediction. She pressed him to her bosom, kissed, and resigned him to his uncle's care. With a keenness of anguish new to his nature, Elim, escorted by the mounted galloglachs, beheld the fair shores of Inbherseine, and the still lovelier crag and woodland of Glengariff, fade behind him, until they were shut out from his view by an intervening mountain. Towards noon, however, new sights and scenes began to occupy his mind, and restore his spirits to their usual buoyancy.

CHAPTER V.

THEY travelled for some days through a long tract of country, distinguished by scenery of alternate barrenness and beauty; spending one night at the castle of a friendly

chief, where Elim was received with high distinction; another in the dwelling of a biatach (one of those houses of free entertainment at that time common throughout Europe); and another in a monastery near the road.

About noon on the fourth day of their journey, Elim beheld for the first time, the broad and gleaming face of the Sionainn, the queen of Irish rivers, and the deep and extensive woods which environed the distant seat of letters and religion. The strange prospect of the place, rendered more impressive by the tolling of a bell from the adjoining abbey, cast a new damp on the spirits of the young Ithian, and he alighted at the college gate with a face as serious as if death were the least he expected on his entrance. O'Driscoll conveyed him to the gate of the building. Over the sculptured archway was the figure of a religious having the clerical tunic and bonnet, and holding the crosier and episcopal garments of a prelate lying dead before him. Being the time of study, the court was deserted, except by the hoary porter, and four or five monks, who were walking along to and fro under the shadow of a line of beeches, and reading in silence. Passing this stilly scene, Elim was conducted to the apartment of the abbot. But, before we proceed farther with his history, let us say something of the place which was for many years to be the scene of his education; and perhaps the reader will forgive us, if, before we penetrate farther into the history of this foundation, we glance for an instant at that of the land in which it rose.

For some centuries before the birth of Elim, its situation was peculiar among the states of Europe. While the coasts of Italy were darkened by the Saracen invasions, while Germany became a waste before the arrows of the Hungarians, and the hoofs of the Lombard horse were trampling on the vineyards of the south, Ireland lay far away amongst the breakers of the Atlantic, an island devoted to the cultivation of religion and the peaceful

sciences, the school of Christian letters, and the nursery of Christian virtues. Not many centuries had passed away since even this distant isle had been itself, as it has since once more become, the scene of fierce and lawless violence. From the remotest period of its colonization, down to that when first the symbol of Christianity appeared upon its shores, it had been the fate of Ireland to nurse within its bosom the seeds of civil strife and enmity. The lonely hyperborean isle, the theme alike of bardic and historic fiction, its shores, though not unseen, were long untouched by the enquiring navigators of the south. The Phœnician trader beheld its wooded hills from his galley-poop at sea, but the zeal of traffic, his only stimulus, tempted him not so far from his appointed course. A few curious geographers at length descended on the coasts, and time hands down to us the meagre charts of a Ptolemy and a Nennius. The Roman conqueror saw from the shores of Mona, the mist-like vision of its mountains; but the zeal of conquest did no more with him than the zeal of gain with the Phœnician. The isle was left untouched, while a Celtic people wandered in her woods and dwelt in her caverns, without laws and without learning; simple in their customs, and limited in their desires.

Time rolled away, and the picture changed in figure and in hue. The peaceful Celts departed, and a varied race, driven hither as to a calm retreat by the convulsions of their native countries, brought with them to the isle the lineaments and character of German, Spanish, and of Gallic origin. The fields became more populous, the Breton lawgiver sat, scroll in hand, within the earthen walls of his roofless court, and gave judgment on the violated compacts of society. Small villages, with wicker dwellings, and a simple palisade for their defence, were scattered throughout the plains and vallies. A form of monarchical government, perhaps unique in its kind, united

for a time the bonds of social interest throughout the island. The Ard-righ sat in his wooden palace at Temair, and took counsel with the provincial sovereigns of the kingdom for its better government. A form of worship,* which seems to have been a compound of the superstition of Zoroaster, and the Scandinavian idolatry, but bloodless in its rites, was established throughout the country. The ploughshare already pierced the bosom of the soil, and the husbandman addressed his devotions to the luminary that prospered his exertions. The buachaill, like the Arab, fed his flock from plain to plain; the herds of cattle browsed along the streams, and the music of the harp resounded at evening in the bawn, or under the shadow of a Druid grove. The sound of the great buabhall† was heard in the calm sunset from the summit of the lofty round tower,‡ proclaiming the quarters of the moon, and the changes of the seasons, the only marks which science here had yet engraved upon the wheels of time. The spirit of poetry and music visited the islanders, but the demon of war soon also waved his torch amid the woods, and the numbers of voluptuous love were blended with the sounds of pain and violence. The toi-seach, seated at night upon his rushen couch, with his three-legged table before him, laid out with a dish of shamrock§ and a cup of mead, heard from the poet of his race, the actions of his fathers, and the deeds of his own arm in the battle. The stones of the earth were fashioned into weapons of destruction; the brazen sword-blade shone in the grasp of the galloglach; the sling, the arrow and the javelin, made the ways unsafe to the lonely hob-beler, and his barefooted daltin; the island was divided between licentiousness and war; and the steel of Sparta glimmered in the bowers of Cyprus.

* See Note 15.

† See Note 2.

‡ See Note 17. Round Towers.

§ See Note 18. The Shamrock.

CHAPTER VI.

Thus stood the isle, when once again a sudden change reclaimed it. The weapons of the Dal Cassian and the Eoganacht, of the Danaan and the Eremonian, of the Eberian and the Ernain, of the Firbolg, the Irian, and many other septes of the divided colonists, clashed in murderous and untiring conflict from year to year throughout the country. The slightest or the weightiest occasion, a disputed claim to the imperial succession, or a miserable point of etiquette, were sufficient to embroil whole provinces in war. An unhappy system of inheritance, and ill-adjusted laws of property, together with a thirst of false glory, violent in proportion to the natural fervour of the people, had banished security from all parts of the island, and peace from the minds of the inhabitants. Their monarchs, when not occupied in making their power felt by the princes of their own nation, are said to have employed themselves in foreign wars, in aiding the natives of the adjoining island against the Roman colonists, and even to have carried the weapons of Erin to the foot of the Alps. The event, which brought to pass the important change above alluded to, forms a striking feature in the annals of the isle, and may constitute a fitting prelude to the tale of the young chieftain's education.

The Druids* of Meath had received, with funeral honours, on the shores of Coige Laighean,† the body of their perished monarch Daithi, who was killed by lightning in the Gallic wars; and conducted it, accompanied by his nephew Laoghaire (or Léary), and the returning banners

* See Note 15.

† Leinster.

of his army, to the royal sepulchre at Réilic na Riogh. They spoke his praise, they sung his caoine, they buried him with his horse and armour, and Laoghaire was placed in his stead on the throne of Teamair. He is commemorated as a prince of warlike talents and of civil energy, which, however, appear to have contributed more to his own fame than to the peace or happiness of his neighbours. In order to do honour to the Druids, whose worship he befriended, he attended at the great festival of Bel, at the famous temple of Uisneach in Meath, accompanied by the queen, and the estates of Teamair. It was the custom, on the eve of this festival, to extinguish all the fires throughout the kingdom, in order that they might be re-illuminated from one kindled for the purpose by the hand of the Chief Druid.

The sun had already sunk, the pile of fagots was raised before the temple, and the Ard-righ and his royal retinue, surrounded by a multitude of people, silently awaited the moment when the chief Druid was to light up the fire. Before the time, however, had arrived, and while all was yet dark, silent, and expectant, a light was suddenly seen to rise at some distance from the temple. The Druids exclaimed aloud against this profanation of their rites, and demanded of the monarch that the extreme punishment appointed by the laws should be inflicted on this hardy wretch, whoever he might be, by whom the festival of Bel was violated. The monarch gave orders that the transgressor should be brought before him, and his messengers returned, bringing with them Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland.

The great missionary defended the act of which he was accused, by announcing to the assembly the truths of Christianity. A long and laborious life was afterwards spent in completing that alteration in the national worship of which this was almost the commencing stroke. The peaceful revolution was effected without meeting any

opposition, save that of the ineffectual disputation of the Druids, and it spread with fervour and rapidity. Princes gave up their lands and dwellings to the service of religion and of charity. Kings frequently resigned the asion of empire, and took the monastic habit within the walls of Ardmacha, or of Hy; churches and seminaries sprung up in every district, monasteries were endowed and crowded with religious to an extent that seems hardly credible, even on all the concurrent testimonies of the day. So great was the zeal of religion, that a modern historian complains of the negligence evinced by the national annalists, for a long time after, in affairs of military interest, and charges them with paying more attention to the building of a church than to the fighting of a battle. There was scarce a district without its religious foundations; scarce an islet, or lone retreat throughout the country that did not harbour some religious penitent; or a desert rock that had not been at some time sanctified by the spirit of devotion and of self-denial.

Unlike many of the religious foundations of that period, which were constructed after the national manner, of wood, the college of Muing-hairid* was a damhliag, or stone building, and its grouted fragments, diffused at this day over an extensive tract of ground, demonstrate the masonic skill of its founders. The religious, who were of the order of Saint Mainchin,† the founder of the abbey, and of prodigious number, had, as is usual in such establishments, their various duties appointed to them. Some devoted themselves wholly to a life of contemplation, and of manual labour. Others employed themselves in the care of the sick, the entertaining of strangers, the giving of alms, and the instruction of the numerous youth who flocked hitherward in great numbers from different parts of the island, from the shore of Inismore, and even from

* See Note 19. Mungharid, or Mungret Abbey.

† See Note 20. Saint Mainchin.

those of some continental nations. Those who were skilled in psalmody succeeded each other in the choir, which night and day, for many a century, sent forth its never ceasing harmony of praise; while far the greater number were employed in cultivating with their own hands the extensive tracts of ground which lay around the convent, and the neighbouring city. Morn after morn, regular as the dawn itself, the tolling of the convent bell, over the spreading woods which then enriched the neighbourhood, awoke the tenants of the termon-lands, warning them that its cloistered inhabitants had commenced their daily rule, and reminding them also of that eternal destiny which was seldom absent from the minds of the former. The religious, answering to the summons, resumed their customary round of duties. Some aided the almoner in receiving the applications of the poor, and attending to their wants. Some assisted the chamberlain in refitting the deserted dormitory. Some were appointed to help the infirmarian in the hospital. Some aided the pittance and cellarer in preparing the daily refection, as well for the numerous members of the confraternity, as for the visitors, for whose accommodation a separate refectory was furnished; and after the solemn rite of the morning, at which all assisted, had been concluded, the great body of the monks departed to their daily labour on the adjoining tillage and pasture lands.

Sometimes, at this early hour, the more infirm and aged, as well as the more pious of the neighbouring peasantry, were seen thridding their way along the woodland paths, to mingle in the morning devotions of the religious. The peasant, as he trotted by on his karr, laden with the produce of the season, paused for an instant to hear the matin hymn, and added a prayer that heaven might sanctify his toil. The fisherman, whose curach glided rapidly along the broad surface of the river, rested on his oars at the same solemn strain, and resumed his labour with a more

measured stroke and less eager spirit. The son of war and rapine, who galloped by the place, returning with sated passions from some nocturnal havoc, reined up his hobbie at the peaceful sounds, and yielded his mind unconsciously to an interval of mercy and remorse. The oppressive chieftain and his noisy retinue, not yet recovered the dissipation of some country coshering,* hushed for a time their unseemly mirth as they passed the holy dwelling, and yielded in reverence the debt which they could not pay in sympathy. To many an ear the sounds of the orison arrived, and to none without a wholesome and awakening influence.

Not far remote, amid the trees, arose the wooden dwelling of the Comhorba, a kind of lay prior, who divided with the Airchinneach the care of the tarmoinn lands, the duties of hospitality to strangers, of preserving the fabric of the college and protecting its revenues. These two orders, which were peculiar to ancient Ireland, by relieving the professed religious of all merely temporal cares, left them at liberty for the undivided pursuit of their more essential duties. Besides the Master Regent, the college had its readers and prælectors; and the liberality of those princes of Leath Mogha, by whom it had been originally endowed, enabled the religious, in addition to their other offices of charity, to supply the students gratuitously, not only with food and raiment, but with lodging and books for their instruction, a precious article in those times, when profane literature, long exanimate in Europe, was beginning to struggle into life.

The small city of Deochain Neassan,† which, like the modern Gottingen, was intended chiefly for the accommodation of the numerous students at the adjoining seminary, had already begun to raise its wooden peillices and low-eaved roofs between that building and the river side.

* Feast.

† See Notes 19 and 20.

Here, through the dreary winter months, the rushlights gleamed from the studious windows of the well-born natives and strangers, as well as of their poorer condisciples, whom either the national love of letters, or a desire of participating in the state privileges attached to the literary character, had tempted to avail themselves of the gratuitous instruction of the religious. At long intervals appeared the shop of some Danaan dealer in forest skins, or vender of dyed stuffs, while the ringing anvil of some Fearbolg artificer in iron work mingled its sound with the eternal choir of the distant abbey. By night, and with the light of rush torches, the religious gave their instructions in the college. By day, the greater portion of the body was sent abroad, to pursue their customary toil, till night recalled them to this hive of holiness and industry. In the summer months their literary tasks were laid aside for more secluded exercises, and the students were dispersed, the wealthy to their own friends, while the strangers and the poor were maintained by the college, amply supported for the purpose by its original endowments, as well as by the labour of the monks.

Bounding in the western prospect from the college gate, and overlooking with its rugged brows the spreading sheet of silver which the Sionann rolled along its base, appeared the Rock of Carraig o g-Conaill,* as yet uncrowned by its forbidding battlements, and only graced by the distant clustering foliage. On tranquil days, the convent toll was answered from the churches in Luimneach na Long,† the City of Ships, which reared its water-girt walls above the parted flood at the distance of a few miles up the river. Southward appeared the uneven summit of Cnocfierna, and on the east arose the rounded heights which divided this principality from that of Ur-Mumhain, the possession of the children of Cian.

* See Note 21. The Rock of Carraig o g-Conaill. † Limerick.

On the further side of the river, softened in the haze of distance, the eye rested on the wooded hills and cultured vales of Clare, where the wreathing smoke arose in various places, from some concealed Eberian brugh, or rustic village.

Scattered through the woods by which the college and city were surrounded, appeared many a secluded peillice, or skin-thatched cottage of wood, the dwelling of some humble tiller of the termon lands, whose healthy figure and mantle of decent frieze, unlike the lean and beaten aspect of those who dwelt upon the secular townships, proclaimed him the dependent of no harsh and griping landlord. The simple life of the religious limited their wants to a circle easily filled, and their extensive possessions vested in them for the common good, left ample means of charity at their disposal. Nor was the exercise of public hospitality, in those days, when places of hired refreshment were unknown, confined to the religious orders. On a crossway, which, at the distance of a few miles, divided the great road leading to the antique city of Ath-dara, appeared the open dwelling of the Brughaidh, or Biatach, which, as it had been endowed before the college, for that purpose, by the civil authorities, now shared with that establishment the honour of affording rest and reflection to the pilgrim and the stranger.

Thus, whatever tumults agitated the quiet of surrounding townships, benevolence and peace reigned always undisturbed in those districts dedicated to religious seclusion; and few instances occur, through all the troubled course of Irish history, in which these sanctified retreats were profaned by civil violence,—a circumstance so unusual amongst contemporary nations. The causes already assigned had banished peace and security from all parts of the island, except those which were devoted by common consent to the service of religion and of learning; but it was enough to bear this character to ensure respect

and forbearance, even from the most licentious. Few, indeed, were the instances of mercy and of quiet to those who tilled the soil of secular proprietors. In their holdings, the ravaged corn-field and the driven herd made famine a frequent, and poverty a constant guest, nor did violence leave to industry any other mode of compensation than the fatal instruction which she gave, and which was too often bettered in the learning. But the voice of war sounded not in the convent shades; the houses of the Brughaidh and the Airchinneach were always open, and none envied the calm which all were invited to partake.

Such was the college of Muingharid, such was the land in which it stood, and the train of events from which it derived its origin. Such was the scenery by which it was surrounded, and such the character of its possessors, of its dependents, and of its neighbours. If worldly pleasure were excluded from its precincts, its share of happiness was yet not small. The even and recollected cheerfulness which illumined the manners of the religious, gave a brightness to their austerity, and made virtue attractive in the eyes of their disciples. The voice of authority, though not forgotten, was rarely exercised; and love removed its sharpness from restraint, and its weariness from duty.

CHAPTER VII.

HAVING passed the extensive court of the building, the Sior Lamh and his bewildered nephew arrived at the door which opened to that part of the building occupied by the superior and the principal officers of the confraternity. A porter showed them to an apartment plainly furnished, in which Elim saw an old man dressed in a white cassock, with a black cloak and hood thrown

back on his shoulders. His head was bald, but a long white beard descended in waves of silver on his breast. O'Driscoll, whom he recognized with the air of a relative, having declared the principal object of his journey, the old man beckoned Elim to his side, and pressed the little trembling hand within his own, using at the same time some cheering expressions to remove the sense of overpowering awe with which the youthful Ithian was oppressed.

"Young as thou art," said he, "thou hast the steady eye of an O'Haedha. Thou dost know me, Elim.' I am an Ithian, too. Take courage, child ; we are not going to make a monk of thee."

Elim smiled, but still cast awful looks around him, and seemed as if he had his own opinion upon these assurances. In consideration of his rank, it was decided that he should not be sent, like the generality of the students, to occupy lodgings in the adjoining town, but remain for the present in the apartments of the precentor, the person who had the chief direction of the choir service.

"The precentor," said the abbot, "is a favourite with the students ; thou wilt like him much for a companion, Elim."

The Sior Lamb, to his nephew's great delight, remained for the night at the abbey, and Elim was permitted to occupy the same apartment. At midnight, hearing a bell toll, and supposing it was the signal for rising, he got up and put on his little triubhis and cota.* Opening the door of the apartment without waking his uncle, and passing into a long hall which led to the cells of the religious, he met one of the confraternity leaving his apartment, with a rosary and a burning taper of twisted rushes in his hand.

* See Notes 5 and 42.

"Thou art early up, my little friend," he said, "what makes thee restless?"

"I heard the bell," said Elim, in a timid tone, "and I thought it was for waking."

"Thou mayest go back to thy couch," said the religious, smiling. "We are not going to put thee to so severe a discipline. It is only the monks who rise at midnight."

At day-break, the precentor came to awaken him. The abbot had truly said, that Elim would find pleasure in his company. He was a man of middle age, the son of a neighbouring Dal Cassian chief, who had at an early period devoted himself to religion, and displayed an extraordinary genius for music and poetry. He spent the greater part of the day in showing Elim over the foundation and through the neighbourhood, and in discoursing cheerfully of their mode of life, the country and employments of the students, and the nature of their studies. Passing along a winding path which led from the abbey through an extensive thicket, a scene of singular novelty and animation burst upon the eyes of the young Ithian. They passed from beneath the boughs of the closely-woven oak and alder trees, and suddenly entered on a wide tract of highly cultivated land, of more than half a mile in extent, and bounded by a well-built wall, on which above a thousand monks, in their conventual attire, were busy in the work of harvest. Some reaped and bound the corn, some piled it into stooks, and some conveyed it home on Carrs. Some plied the scythe, the rake, and the fork, on the adjoining meadow lands, while others formed the hay already saved into stacks and ricks. Here rose a barn, in which resounded the strokes of a hundred flails; while a corresponding number of religious labourers, winnowed the grain abroad in the light autumn wind. The noise of grating quernstones sounded from a building on their left, through the

open doors of which Elim perceived a number of monks at work in sifting and preparing the flour. Far away on the right appeared a gently undulating plain, dotted with tufts of ash and birch trees, on which fed numerous herds and flocks, under the superintendence of religious shepherds and religious herdsmen. A calm autumnal sunshine rested on the extensive scene of labour, and the effect of what he saw, combined with the view of the river and its numerous shipping, together with the murmur of the town and of the distant city, appeared to Elim to constitute the most beautiful and animating sight he had ever witnessed in his life.

The precentor next conducted him through the town of Deochain Nessain. It was at present somewhat deserted, for no public instructions were given in the convent during the months of summer and autumn. At their return to the abbey, as Elim passed the court-yard, he saw about a dozen youths at play, who were, as the precentor told him, the only pupils at present in the college, being the sons of distant chieftains and Airés. They got into groups as Elim came in sight, and by their smiling and gazing showed that he was the subject of their conversation.

On the following morning, Elim was introduced to his class-fellows, and before the opening of the winter season, when the town and college were crowded with multitudes of students, had already made a considerable progress in the course of education which the times afforded. It was severe, for in those days learning itself was esteemed a matter of secondary importance to the habits of self-constraint and vigorous application which were acquired in its pursuit. Elim, however, did not shrink from labour. He studied with diligence, obeyed with alacrity, and observed the convent rule with a devout exactness. A love of practical science, a temper at the same time firm and docile, an open simplicity of

mind, an unpresuming courage, and generosity of spirit, rendered him dear to his instructors and his schoolfellows. There are few communities, perhaps, in which some bright characters are not found, unconsciously possessing the love and admiration of the whole ; and it might be said of Elim, to tell his character in one sentence, that, without knowing t himself, he was the general favourite of the college of Muingharid.

On the day before the opening of the public lecture-room, which occurred soon after the festival of Michaelmas, the young chieftain and the precentor entered the room in which preparations had been already made for the commencing season. The chair of the lecturer was decorated with the last boughs of autumn, and benches were placed for the accommodation of some thousands of scholars. As the lectures were always given at night, a number of torch-stands encircled the vast apartment, in each of which was placed a flambeau, composed of twisted rushes, dipped in oil. Neither for these preparations, nor for any other art of manufacture or of husbandry, had the community occasion to go beyond the precincts of their own domain ; their custom being to alternate the labour of the mind with the exertion of the frame, in all the departments of science and of art.

One of the choristers was employed in stringing a cruit of a new invention ; and Elim urged him to put it to the proof, by accompanying his own rich voice in some little melody. He readily complied, and made the extensive building re-echo to the following words, of what happened to be a favourite song of Elir's :

I.

Like the oak by the fountain,
In sunshine and storm ;
Like the rock on the mountain,
Unchanging in form.

Like the course of the river,
Through ages the same ;
Like the mist, mounting ever
To heaven, whence it came.

II.

So firm be thy merit,
So changeless thy soul,
So constant thy spirit,
While seasons shall roll ;
The fancy that ranges
Ends where it began,
But the mind that ne'er changes
Brings glory to man.

Scarce was the song concluded, when one of the young students came running at full speed into the lecture-room, and exclaimed :

"Elim ! Elim ! there is a new scholar from Inismore !"*

Perceiving the precentor, he made a sudden pause, and lowered his head. Elim smiled, and went with him to the yard, where he beheld two figures that struck him forcibly by their features and their strange attire. The first was an old man, thin, and sharp-visaged, with a sternness in the eye and brow that amounted to harshness. He wore a cap like the ancient Phrygian bonnet, the Anglo-Saxon tunic and girdle, in which was stuck a knife called a handsec, and on his feet the blackened buskin and striped stocking of his country. But the second figure attracted most of Elim's observation. It was that of a boy, about his own age, but slightly formed, and with a piercing and somewhat sullen expression of countenance. His attire was gay, even to frivolousness. His head was bare, but the hair around his crown was so curiously plaited as to resemble a close cap ; his tunic, of the finest linen, open on the bosom and adorned with a border, and his girdle highly ornamented. A similar taste pervaded the rest of

* Great Britain.

his attire, and he gazed on the group of boyish scholars that gathered together to whisper and look at the new comer, with a glance that was at the same time proud and shy. At the moment when Elim arrived, the old man was in the act of resigning him into the hands of the master regent, and preparing to depart :

"I give him to thee," said he, "to make of him what I could not, a scholar. Kenric, farewell !" he shook his hand ; "*Here* thou must apply ; here thou wilt be compelled to know that perseverance is the road of learning. There will be no Domnona here to screen thee."

He departed, and the young Anglo-Saxon gazed after him, with features of dismay and grief, The master regent took his hand.

"Take courage, Kenric," he said, "thou wilt not find us so severe as thine uncle thinks."

He led the new pupil into the abbey, and the students went to their play. Before we mention in what way the Anglo-Saxon was disposed of, it is necessary to relate the story of his childhood and extraction.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN the kingdom of the Northumbers, and not far from the banks of the Ouse, stood the castle of the duke Elfwin, a descendant of one of those old heratoches by whom this portion of the Heptarchy was governed, ere Ida formed it into a single kingdom. The castle, in order that its oaken walls might be protected from the violent winds, was situate, after the fashion of the time, in a valley, or dene, called the Dene of Ouse. The building, both for beauty and extent, was the wonder of the surrounding neighbourhood. It was framed throughout of hedge

oak of the hardest grain, and stood in the centre of a princely frank chase, or unenclosed domain, comprehending many miles of park and forest. The chase was one of the finest in the seven kingdoms. The extensive wald, or woodland, abounded in foxes, boars, and wolves for the chase ; the park, in coneys, as fat as those of Meal or Disnege, in hares, in martins, and in red and fallow deer of every quality, from the fawn to the buck, and from the calf to the hart. The river, and a small lake that skirted the wald, were frequented by store of birds. The crane, the bittern, the heron, and the duck, either stalked along the shore, or dived among the reeds, while the pewit wheeled overhead, and the wild swan built her nest amid the sedge, or breasted the wavelets of the lake.

The Dene was allotted to sundry tenants, to be held, as was the Saxon custom, by a copy of court roll ; and ~~these~~ rolls were committed by mutual consent to the keeping of Ailred, a distant relative of the duke, and a thriving citizen of the adjoining town. It was a beautiful vale, chiefly laid out in pasturage ; the uplands stocked with herds of kine and fine-fleeced sheep, while the bottoms, near the river, derived such fertility from the occasional overflowings of the Ouse, that, as Ailred often boasted, if a rod were laid on the field overnight, it would be hidden by the grass at morning. The town, which stood near the borders of the river, consisted of about six or seven score of wooden houses, not framed of oak, like that of duke Elfwin, but slenderly put together of willow, plum-tree, hard-beam, or elm, and in some instances of wicker, plastered with clay. The inhabitants were principally the husbandmen and shepherds of the Dene who (like the vintagers of Spain) combined the characters of rustic and of citizen, besides a few artisans, a clergyman, and a school-master.

Adjoining the town was a bridge, crossing the Ouse, and leading to an extensive common, where a multitude

of poor dependents on the bounty of the great proprietor maintained their little holdings free of charge. On the centre of the bridge was an inscription, in the Saxon dialect, which, with little alteration, might run thus :

“I am free march, as passengers may ken,
To Scots, to Britons, and to Englishmen.”

The remoteness of the place protected it, in a great degree, from suffering in the frequent agitations which disturbed the kingdoms of the Heptarchy ; and the character of the duke himself, who was of a tranquil and studious turn of mind, promoted, in a high degree, the prosperity of his dependents.

The largest, and most commodious, of the dwellings in the town was that of Ailred, already mentioned, who rented a large portion of the Dene ; and, on the score of his relationship to the duke, possessed a considerable portion of his patronage. The house contained, not only the necessary apartments for human inmates, but also comprehended, under the same low roof, a dairy, stable, and all other offices. The principal apartments were impanelled with clay of various colours, white, red, and blue, and Ailred, though now compelled to admit the light through panels of horn, did not despair of seeing the time arrive when the sun should shine upon his humble floor, as on that of his ducal relative, through a lattice glazed with crystal, or perhaps with panes of beryl. He had much increased his wealth by his marriage with Domnona, the daughter of one of those wandering graziers, who, from the earliest times (like the Irish Toltach Tuithrimé),* fed their flocks and herds in companies, from place to place. This patriarchal mode of life was now, however, almost extinct, and confined to the remotest districts. On the occasion of their marriage, the display of wealth

* See Glossary.

on both sides was such as formed the wonder of the Dene, more especially as Ailred was known to be a man of harsh manners, and more addicted to the pursuit, than the parade of riches. His dress on this occasion shone with ornaments of coral, Berwick jet, the erne stone, and other native gems ; nor did that of Domnona fall behind him in magnificence. To her charge was committed the care of the dairy, the principal produce of which consisted of hinds' milk and cheese, while Ailred continued his superintendence of the tillage and pasture lands, and his indefatigable attention to the wishes of his patron.

Returning one morning from the castle of the duke, in less than a year after his marriage, Ailred was met in the main street of the little town by a female neighbour, wrapped in the discreet attire of the Anglo-Saxon matrons. As she encountered Ailred, she put aside the kerchief from her face, and said :

"Son of Aldeswold, I give thee joy."

"What! Is Domnona well?" returned the husband.

"Home with thee," said the matron, "and thou shalt see a sight to make thee a happy man."

As he proceeded, Ailred was met by Osway, the gooseherd, sent officially to announce what had been intimated to him by his female neighbour. Before he had reached his door, he found that the whole town were aware of his good hap ; and a number of interested neighbours were approaching and departing from his threshold, some making, and some satisfying inquiries. The outer room was crowded with kerchiefed matrons, and with the smiling faces of substantial citizens. All gave place with a buzz of congratulation when Ailred made his way through the midst, and it was his severe and learned, but fortuneless brother, Vusefræa, that placed in his arms the dearest burthen parent ever bore, his first born child, a fair and healthy boy.

To please the duke, whose wife and only child had died

some years before, the son of Ailred received the name of Kenric, which was that of his patron's child. By the mother's side, he claimed some connection with the island of Inisfail, where he was now sent to receive his education. Native historians tell us that, as early as the reign of Eremon (the founder of one of the great rival dynasties of ancient Ireland), a body of Picts landed in the harbour of Inbher Slainge (the present Wexford), and were successfully employed by Criomthann, then governor of Coige Laighean, against the Danaan exiles who were accustomed to annoy the coasts from the opposite shores of Britain. In consequence of this service, they sought from Heremon a permanent settlement in the country, but the wary Ardrigh, suspecting that such useful friends, might prove as formidable enemies, instead of complying with their request, procured them possessions on the shores of Inismore, with an agreement that, in all future intermarriages, the children of Irishwomen should inherit without regard to primogeniture. And, from this half Hibernian race, was descended the wife of Ailred, the Anglo-Saxon, and the mother of Kenric.

Kenric inherited from his mother that fairness of complexion, and delicacy of form, which attracted the admiration of Gregory the Great in the slave-mart at Rome ; but what was beauty in Domnona was weakness and effeminacy in her son. As years rolled on, it became evident that the mind of the young Northumbrian was not free from the soft and feminine turn which disfigured his person ; and, unfortunately, his early habits of life, combined with the temper of his superiors, tended to confirm this fatal defect both in the one and in the other. His mind, as is generally the case with such natures, was sharp and suspicious, and his feelings keen and sensitive, and not a little selfish, whenever it was necessary to accompany the effort of generosity with one of self-denial.

These seeds of unhappiness were counter-balanced by

an imagination ardent, active and capacious, and such as, if supplied with proper food, and properly directed, might have led to the formation of an useful and thinking character. As it was, he was left to such material as chance, or the impulse of his own objectless curiosity, brought in his way. Domnona was incapable of instructing him; Ailred despised learning; and Kenric was yet too young to join his father in his agricultural pursuits, and too delicate, as Domnona believed, for the stern discipline of Vuscfraea's school. In consequence of these difficulties, he was left to dispose of his idle time according to his pleasure. Sometimes, he stole off at school-hours to his uncle's house, where, seated by the *reredosse* in the hall (for the luxury of a chimney was in these days unknown), he listened to the tales of Webba, Vuscfraea's only servant. Holding the fair-faced boy between his knees, he would relate, in a low, drowsy tone, long legends of British chivalry and romance; of the giant Albion; of the wars of Brute, and the fall of Gogmagog at Dover; of the unhappy Lear and his ungrateful daughters; and other narratives, such as to Webba seemed but toys and pastime, but which, combined with his habits of mental indolence, were full of future injury to the sensitive and fanciful mind of his young hearer. In this position he would stay, gazing on the wood embers, and listening to Webba, until the shouting and running of children by the door announced the termination of the school hour, and the speedy approach of his rigid uncle. At these dreaded sounds he would hie through the back-door, across the adjoining gardens, which lay behind the town, and arrive at his father's house in time for the afternoon meal. Sometimes, when Webba could not afford time for his amusement, he would accompany Oswy, the little goose-herd, into the fields, and retail for his instruction the histories which he had already stored up in a memory remarkably tenacious of fictitious incident, and

graced with all the exuberance of his own insatiable fancy. Sometimes, when the geese, manifesting an unusual degree of insubordination, demanded the exclusive attention of his auditor, he would sit in the sunshine, near the wald, watching the squirrels in the boughs, or listening for hours to the sound of the wind in the trees, or the rushing of the wandering Ouse. Sometimes he would spend good part of a moonlight night at the window of his sleeping-room, to hear the melancholy song of the nightingale in the thickets of the silent Dene; and at noon he would often lie stretched at length upon the river bank, watching his own airy fancies as they rose and faded, like one on the sea shore, contemplating the irises that arise from the billows as they fall and break in mist and foam upon the strand.

This life of idleness and of romantic luxury laid the foundation of another great deficiency in the character of Kenric. It produced the same effect that satiety of enjoyment is said to do in the licentious; it gave him fitful and unsettled habits, and added, to his natural weakness of resolve, a perpetual incertitude and irresolution of mind, and an incessant change of purpose; this was not heeded by his guardians, because it was only apparent in his amusements, and his pursuits were too frivolous in their eyes to allow the evil at any time to be attended with important consequences. Sometimes Donnona, while busy at her dairy, heard Kenric's voice in the yard, summoning the dogs of the house, limmers, harriers, band-dogs, and all, to look for badgers in the sandy ground and amongst the brush-wood; and, in half an hour after, going out to visit Vuscfraea, she would find him seated by the reredosse, leaning on Webba's lap, and listening to the story of Locrine.

Nor were the parents of Kenric the persons best calculated, either by precept or example, to rectify these defects in their son. It is true the manners of the An-

Anglo-Saxons were pure and simple, for they had not yet been tainted by the influence of those habits of living and feeling which were afterwards introduced by their northern conquerors; and the mind of Kenric unfolded itself in the midst of a modest and pious community. But Ailred and Domnona were not, in the opinion of their neighbours, the most exemplary beings in the Dene of Ouse. Domnona was fond of her child, afraid of her husband, and a little vain of herself. She was not one of those muffled specimens of Anglo-Saxon womanhood, whom the industrious Strutt commends with a patriotic delight for their becoming closeness of attire. The good advice which they were accustomed to hear week after week, from the lips of the successors of Aidan, did not hinder the wife of Ailred from using curling irons, painting her face with stibium, and figuring at the assemblies of the place in a golden headband and vermiculated necklace, all which were practices confessedly beyond the Anglo-Saxon notions of moderation in apparel. In the mean time Ailred, when not employed for the advantage or the pleasure of his patron, was apt to steal out privately, to enjoy his nightly draught of ale, and game of tœfl, at one of the prohibited places of entertainment in the town.

Between them both, young Kenric profited little. If Ailred at any time took notice of his child, it was only to teach him by what signs he should discover to a nicety how much a fat ox might bring to the butcher in retail, or to place him on his knee and sing the old couplet:

“When the sand doth serve the clay,
Then we may sing, Well away!
But when the clay doth serve the sand,
Then it is merry with England.”

Domnona, on the other hand, when at leisure, taught him how to hang his little sagum with the courtliest air,

ald to dispose the *beah*, on festal occasions, with the best effect.

To end this life of idleness, rather than from any faith in the utility of letters, Ailred at length consented to have Kenric placed at the school of his morose and rigid uncle, and Domnona, who began to be ashamed of Kenric's ignorance, accorded a slow consent. Early at morn when their first meal was ended, and Ailred had departed to the Dene, Domnona, wrapping her slight figure in a loose walking dress, and taking the reluctant Kenric by the hand, left home with a heavy heart for the dwelling of Vuscfraea.

The building stood near the bridge already mentioned. As Domnona, holding the delicate Kenric at her side, glided by the open street doors, returning the frequent greetings of the inmates, and almost fearful of committing her fragile toy to hands so harsh as his uncle's, she was met by Alfrida, the same matron who had announced the birth of Kenric to his father. The worthy housewife was, in like manner, accompanied by her son, a round-faced boy. The following conversation passed between the neighbours at their meeting:

"Good day, good neighbour."

"Give ye good day, Alfrida."

"So Ailred sold the kine?"

"Ay, hath he; they are on the Gwethelin* for Cair Lud."†

"And for how much?"

"Five rings a piece the oxen, and three for the heifers."

"Ailred's a thriving man. The year has fallen out ill with Eanfrid. The wild bulls in the wald have gored the kine, and the wolves been at the sheep, and the drought has left the Ouse low and the bottoms bare.

* A highway.

† London.

Why were ye not at the dance the other even? Yet it was poor in mirth, for thou knowest that Oswald ever was a niggard. I had my rings of jet, and a new white coral cross. Is this thy boy? He grows. Dost know me, Kenric?"

Kenric held down his head, ashamed; to Domnona's mortification, and the amusement of Alfrida.

"He does not thrive so well as thine, Alfrida. How dost my fair-faced Eldred?"

"How dost, Domnona?" said the boy, unabashed.

"Ay," said Alfrida, "thanks to Vuscfraea and Vuscfraea's rod, the child has manners and a spice of Latin. Canst tell," she said, addressing Kenric, "the division of the year?"

Kenric was mute.

"What sayest thou, Eldred?"

Eldred cast an eye of conscious superiority on Kenric, and turning up the side of his broad moon-face, repeated in a loud singing tone the well-known words:

*"Junius, Aprilis, Septemque, Novemque, tricenos,
Unum plus relique, Februs tenet octo vicenos,
At si bissextus fuerit superadditur unus."*

"He is a wondrous boy," said Domnona, in a mournful tone.

"Ay, he has got a memory. But I must hasten home. Good day, Domnona."

"Give ye good day, Alfrida."

They passed each other, on their several errands. The resolution of Domnona, which had been shaken by the mention of the rod, received a further shock when she approached the school-house, and heard, within, the murmur of the small community, and the iron tones of Vuscfraea at intervals, commanding silence, or calling up a class. The recollection, however, of the shining superiority of Alfrida's boy overcame her maternal fears, and she entered the dwelling.

CHAPTER IX.

SHE found Vuscfraea in the little school-room, through which, the instant she appeared, a sudden hush prevailed. All eyes were turned on the new comer with the curiosity manifested by the inmates of an aviary at the entrance of a new captive. While Kenric hardly dared to look around, or raise his eyes to the hardly chiselled visage of the unimaginative Vuscfraea, Domnona, in a gentle voice, made known her husband's wishes to his brother, and formally committed Kenric to his care. Vuscfraea heard her with satisfaction, and appointed his nephew a solitary tripod, at a little distance from his own chair. As she was about to depart, Domnona, slightly confused, bade Vuscfraea follow her into the passage leading to the street, and said:

"Thou must deal gently with my boy, Vuscfraea. His poor thin frame could never bear hard usage. He had a fever-fit with his last teeth, and his little strength has never since returned. Besides his disposition is so gentle, that a word to him is more than the rod to another boy."

Vuscfraea heard her with a stern brow, his eyes fixed hard upon the ground, and one ear slightly turned towards Domnona, as if to give her a fair hearing. When she had ended, he replied, in a tone that made her tremble:

"I will make thy boy a scholar; I have no pets, no favourites, no darlings. There is no Cyprus, woman, on my map. Vuscfraea makes not sybarites, but men."

"Thou knowest best," said Domnona, in a deprecating tone.

"Let Ailred keep his boy," continued the monarch of the pigmies, "if I am to be thwarted in my discipline. If fondling and dandling be the education he desires for

him, let him keep his boy at home. Let him keep him to feed kine, and fatten on the produce of the Dene, but leave letters to those who know how to endure and labour. Take off thy boy, take him off!"

"I pray thee," said Domnona, "say no more. Thou knowest best. I hope thou wilt not let Ailred know aught of this folly, Vuscfraëa. It was entirely my own motion."

So saying, and recommending her boy to the care of Providence, she left the house, while Vuscfraëa compressed his lips, and pausing for a time, repeated in a severe tone:

"Thy motion! And I might have judged it so. Ye are proper guides for youth. Ye must have feasts and revels, jet from the hills, and coral from the coasts, your erne stones, muscle pearls, and chains of gold, your comforters and fisting hounds to carry in your bosoms. Nay, nay, Vuscfraëa's rod shall not bud and blossom for lack of use, I promise thee. Thy motion sayest thou? I'll make that motion vain."

Notwithstanding this stern resolve, Vuscfraëa spared to Kenric the dernier punishment in such communities, but unfortunately made up in severity of manner what was omitted in corporeal discipline, and visited on his feelings the infliction which he spared his frame. All who have undergone that fearful ordeal the first day at school, may imagine something of Kenric's feelings after the departure of Domnona, and during the whole lonesome afternoon. Few of his schoolfellows were of more than his own age, for Vuscfraëa only professed to prepare his pupils for the more expensive seminaries of Cair Grant or Iuisfail. They were for the greater part of the day busy in humming over their tasks, so that an occasional glance, or whispered jest, was all the notice that the new scholar received throughout the day; and he sat in contemplative silence, the loneliest spectacle in all the

Dene. Towards evening, when Vuscfraea went to order some household business, those who had ended their literary toil, began to acknowledge their new companion in the usual manner, by gathering around his chair, and asking him sundry witty questions, such as—"what kind of a man was his grandame?" "how many feathers in a band-dog's tail?" "what would he give a yard for the noise of a wheelbarrow?" &c. At length, growing more familiar, some took the liberty of pulling his hair, some tapped him on the head, some twitched him by the nose, and by divers sleights and jests so lowered him in his own esteem, that he looked upon them all as beings of a superior order. One boy, in particular, something above his own size, excited general amusement by taking Kenric under the arm, as if for the purpose of protection; but, while in a voice of ironical sternness, he commanded the others to forbear, he adroitly inflicted, under the mask of friendship, some severe corporeal chastisement behind; an insult of which Kenric, for prudential reasons, did not take any notice.

Kenric's softness of disposition rendered him, for an unusual length of time, a subject for such intellectual sport as the above, and this, combined with the rigid manner of Vuscfraea, made school no place of pleasure. His only consolation through the day was looking forward to the hour of breaking up, and his sunny stroll by the river-side, or through the shady wald, with such of his schoolfellows as by a little assistance at their tasks, or by other means, he was able to bring into his interest. But the pleasantest hours which he passed, while at his uncle's school, were those which he spent at evening, near the little bridge which spanned their native river, in listening to the wild tales of King Arthur and his brave Silures, sung to the sound of horse-hair harpstrings, by some wandering minstrel, the wonder of a gaping crowd. In returning home by moonlight, after spending whole hours in this man-

ner, Kenric would often employ the knowledge he had acquired, in laying down plans for his own future life, which it may be well imagined were none of the driest or most common-place. He often privately determined with himself, on suffering some rebuke for his remissness, that, after having conquered all the dragons, and slain all the magicians by which he understood Europe was then infested, when he should return at the head of a large army to his native town, the case would be different with some of its inhabitants who now exercised authority over him. Towards his father, all rigid as he was, he proposed acting with filial and heroic forgiveness, but as for his uncle, the schoolmaster, he privately determined to make an example of him.

These designs, however, he kept profoundly buried in his own mind until he had made himself master (so far as his own indolence and Vuscfraea's over severity permitted) of the course of study which his uncle taught. The time now arrived for transmitting him to some more considerable mart of letters, in order to complete his education, or else for initiating him into the mysteries of his father's calling. So urgent were Domnona and her brother-in-law to have the former alternative adopted, that Ailred, who cherished himself an open scorn of letters, at length gave way to their persuasions, and agreed, with a reluctant heart, to send his son to Inisfail in pursuit of scholarship. The manner of his education had impressed Kenric with no feelings of prepossession in favor of learning and of virtue; and, when he parted from his tender mother, he believed that he was giving her up for a whole community of Ailreds and Vuscfraeas. Travelling with his uncle, who kindly undertook the charge of his pupil on the way, in one of those square-bodied carriages used by the Anglo-Saxons of the period, they arrived at Cair Kyby,* whence they embarked in a vessel like the war-

* Holyhead.

ships used in the time of Ecbert, and on the following day cast anchor in the bay which opened from Bailé an Atha Cliath, or city of the Ford of Hurdles.* Travelling at a rapid rate through the territories of Laighean,† of Laoighis,‡ of Osruidhe,§ of Ur-Muimhean, and, finally, passing the Dal Cassian frontier, they drove at length by the great city of Luimneach na Luing, and penetrated the solitudes of Muingharid. The multitude and strangeness of the objects he had seen, and the places he had passed, the deep and lonely woods by which the convent was surrounded, the strange attire of its inmates, and the sense of living, for the first time, in a country not his own, increased the apprehensions of the young Northumbrian and made him dread the change still more as he proceeded. But as the woodland opened on their view, disclosing an autumnal scene of industry and peace, and the ceaseless harmonies of the eternal choir resounded in the tranquil groves, he could not forbear joining in the exclamations of delight with which Vusefræa looked upon the celebrated scene.

Such were the principal circumstances that had distinguished the life of Kenric, ere Elim saw him first within the convent gate. On the evening after his admission, the Ithian again beheld him in the lecture room at its opening for the season. The spectacle presented on the occasion was one of uncommon splendor. The circle of massy torches which surrounded the apartment was lighted up, and shone on the faces and forms of more than two thousand pupils, of every degree. The lecturer who delivered the opening address, discharged his task to the delight of Elim, and the satisfaction of his entire auditory. He painted, in language so eloquent, the utility of science, and dwelt with so much force upon its pleasures

* Dublin.

† Leix, now called Queen's County.

‡ Leinster

§ Ossory.

and advantages, that the minds of all his hearers were stimulated to its pursuit, and even the wavering fancy of the Northumbrian was for the moment fixed and elevated with a thirst of useful knowledge and of active virtue. On the following day the studies of the season commenced, and Kenric entered on his course, in company with Elim and those of his own age. The classic tongues, the imperfect systems of history, geography, astronomy, and other sciences then extant, constituted the general course laid down for the great body of the students; while a few, intending to devote themselves to particular professions, were instructed in genealogy, in medicine, or in the composition of poetry; for in those days, when all history, whether domestic or national, was preserved in verse, the art last named was an important and essential branch of study.

Kenric was placed in a small apartment at no great distance from the young Ithian, where he was provided with a table, a stool, and such books as he required. About noon, hearing a bell ring, he went to the door, and perceived by the snatching of caps, tumultuous voices, leaping and hurrying out of doors, that it was the time of recreation. Closing the door of his apartment, he followed the tiny crowd, but was ashamed to thrust himself into their sports, and all were too busy in the pursuit of their own pleasures to take notice of the stranger. Oppressed by the scene of joy from which he was shut out, he walked slowly away towards the side of the little stream which flowed by the abbey, and, sitting at the foot of a thick ash, began to think of the Dene of Ouse, until the tears came plentifully down his cheeks. In this situation he was found by three of the students who had come hither to spend their time of recreation in angling. The first was a son of a Fearbolg chief from the Province of Spears (Cuige Laighean: that is, Leinster), the second a young Danaan from Connacht, and the third was

the Ithian chief, who pursued his sport at a little distance behind.

"What fish is here," said the Danaan, as he put aside a thick bough of weeping ash, and suddenly discovered Kenric musing at the other side of it. The latter turned quickly away, and hid his face.

"Let him alone," said the Fearbolg, "it is the Saxon burgher's son, that would have been a duke's if he could have chosen his own father."

"Not yet done weeping after the Northumbrian fire-logs and four meals a day," added the Danaan, while he cast out his line, and passed the spot where Kenric was sitting.

Elim, who listened to these speeches in silence, kept his eye fixed on the trembling line in the water, while the students strolled down the bank pursuing their sport, without taking farther notice of the stranger. He looked from time to time at the friendless Anglo-Saxon, until the bell sounded for the hour of study. As he rolled up his line and prepared to depart, he said aloud to Kenric :

"Thou shouldst not heed these jeering rogues, good Saxon. 'Tis the sport of those youths to see thee vexed, but if thou wouldst only laugh when they jest at thee, they would shortly give thee peace."

"If thou wert so far from home as I am," said Kenric, "thou wouldst not like to be jeered at by strangers."

"Nor did I, in trath," said Elim. "It was so with me when first I came to Muingharid, but they soon ceased when I took all in jest, for I spoiled their mirth when I began to turn it on my own side. But thou hast best come this way to the college, for the bell has rung."

They walked together to their lodgings, Elim, as he strolled along, assuming the patron, and letting the respectful Northumbrian into the college politics, acquainting him with their mode of life, their sports, and habits,

and making inquiries of similar nature with respect to Kenric's native place. The latter, by degrees, grew familiar and confiding, and before they separated it was agreed that Elim should call for Kenric in his room on the following day, that he might accompany him to the play-ground. At the night lecture and examination, they met again, with increased good will ; and Kenric went to rest with recovered spirits, happy in the thought of having already made a friend at Muingharid.

Scarce had the bell tolled the first signal note of recreation on the following day, when Elim thrust in the door of the Northumbrian's room.

"Up books, and play !" he said. "Come out, come out, come out !"

The Anglo-Saxon sized his barread and they went out together. Elim introduced him at the ground by exclaiming aloud :

"Here's one at last to tell us how the Anglo-Saxons play the *Base*."

The friend of Elim was sure to attract attention, and the students left their venerable games of picky, goal, and other youthful sports, to gaze on the new comer, and hear his speech. Kenric readily entered on the explanation that was required, initiating his hearers into all the amusing mysteries of the *prisoner's bars, base, home, &c.*, and illustrating his lecture as he ended, by going through the principal manœuvres of the game. With the young, as with the old, those are most certain of applause and favor who can contribute to their interest or pleasure. The aim of Elim was entirely gained, and the Northumbrian, ere he left the ground, had the satisfaction of hearing the name of "Kenric" familiar in almost every mouth.

From this time forward Kenric's time flowed pleasantly enough. His studies, it is true, were severe, but the hours of relaxation were proportionately delightful. In

some days after, while they were at play, Kenric happened to take off his barread, in order to suffer the cool wind to play on his head. One of the students, the same who first had found him weeping on the bank, observing the curious fashion of his hair, plaited on the crown, and cropped close behind, instead of flowing down upon the neck and shoulders, after the manner of the celebrated Irish *coolun*,* said, as he leaned upon his *spwack* and gazed on Kenric :

“Anglo-Saxon, if the Prælector sees thee with that short crop, he will not leave thee long in the enjoyment of it. He’ll make an Irishman of thee in that respect.”

Kenric, who had by this time recovered his natural spirits, replied with readiness :

“Neither head nor foot, shall thy Prælector ever make an Irishman of me. An Anglo-Saxon I was born, and an Anglo-Saxon I will die.”

“Ay,” said the other, looking back, “if thy father do not sell thee to some ceannuighet† of Port Lairge‡ for a load of peltry and an Irish hound.”

Kenric blushed deeply at this allusion to a disgraceful species of traffic at that time carried on between the islands.

“Thou mightest have spared,” he said, “a reproach that but half reaches me. If there be sellers in England, there are buyers in Inisfail, so the shame is even betwixt us.”

“Well spoken, Anglo-Saxon !” said several voices. “It is no matter,” said the other speaker, “the Prælector will make thee wear the *coolun** after all.

“Thou shalt see,” replied Kenric, “if he will not be wiser than to meddle with my head.”

“How ! meddle ! Hear ye this for disobedience !”

* See Note 22. The Coolun.

† Merchant.

‡ Waterford.

cried the other, "methinks it is his business to meddle with it."

"With the inside it may," said Kenric, "but not with the outside."

"In good truth," said his opponent, "thou needest not grudge the fashioning of thy hair to him who has the moulding of thy brains. It is apparent on which of the two the Anglo-Saxons set most value, since thou leavest him the one without murmuring, and fighest so stoutly for the other."

"It was not I gave him my brains to mould," said Kenric, "and even if I had, the moulding of people's brains is his business, and not the cutting of their hair. So let him leave my head alone, I would advise. I'll wear it after the Northumbrian mode, although it be the only Saxon head at college."

Saying this, he turned away, humming a verse of a song.

"The Prælector will make that youth turn a different tune," said the Danaan, as he continued his play with his companions. "He'll show him that he has a right to meddle with his head and with his ears too, if he does not change his manners."

The Prælector, however, did not manifest any hostility to the Northumbrian mode of hair dressing. Both Kenric and the Danaan were admonished for the altercation which, by some means unknown, soon reached the ears of their superiors; but this circumstance and his growing popularity prevented the recurrence of any taunting remarks on Kenric's country or extraction. In the mean time, his friendship with the young Ithian acquired daily strength. Both were diligent, fervent, and emulous. While Kenric learned steadiness and regularity from the Ithian, the very task of instruction was for the latter in itself an additional stimulus to exertion. Both excelled in their studies, though the capacity which they

displayed was different in its kind. The strength and force of Elim's intellect, his sound judgment, and love of his race, led him no less by inclination than necessity to the study of the more solid departments of literature, such as history, genealogy (which the peculiar constitution of his country rendered an important branch of knowledge), and the walks of practical science. Kenric's imagination, and some remains of an habitual love of pleasure, though they did not hinder his proficiency in science, directed his taste more readily to the cultivation of lighter studies. Both, however, proceeded in their career with general distinction, and both were likewise remarkable for a quality, not always the concomitant of shining abilities, a fervent and unobtrusive piety.

CHAPTER X.

DURING the festival of Nollaig (Christmas), the students enjoyed a relaxation from their studies, and many parties were formed for the purpose of making excursions to the frozen lakes of Coolnapishé and Guir, whose mountain barrier looked stateliest in the iron garb of winter; to Cill Molua (Killaloe), where the still Sionann flowed calmly at the base of a clifted mountain, robed in snow and frost, and even to the scattered islots of Logh Ribh, in whose waves the detested Meibh* met her death from the sling of Forbhuidhe. The invigorating exercise, which the tourists underwent both on foot and in the horse-skin noevogs in which they ascended the river, prepared them well for the close application of the ensuing spring. The season of Lent soon followed, during which all parties of amusement were suspended, strict

* See Note 23. Queen Meibh.

silence was maintained, all recreation except such as was absolutely necessary for the health of the community laid aside, and the minds of all directed to contemplative seclusion and retreat. A general air of self-restraint and seriousness seemed to pervade the college, the town and the adjoining townships, villages, and cities, as if at the announcement of some great public calamity; the joyous shouting of the students at recreation hours was no longer heard; and men met in the streets, and conversed with thoughtful visages, and in an under tone. After the solemn festival of Easter, which was celebrated with magnificent processions, the ringing of bells, vocal and instrumental music, and all the demonstrations of general rejoicing, the labours of the spring began. The cattle were unhoused, the monks were busy in the field with the plough and the spade, and the husbandry of the year commenced in all its departments. On May eve, the gates of the college, the doors of the lecture room, and the lecturer's chair were decorated with green boughs and flowers still more abundantly than at the opening of the season; the doors and windows of the town of Deochain Neassan were wreathed and garlanded, and the whole body of students proceeded in regular procession to the general examination and concluding address with which the season was to terminate. The answering both of Elim and of Kenric attracted general applause, and the lecturer concluded the proceedings by pointing out the course of study which it would be proper for all to continue during the period of vacation at their private dwellings. The multitude of students then separated for the summer and autumn, during which the wealthier returned to their friends, with the exception of the few who, like Elim and the Northumbrian, were maintained within the immediate precincts of the Abbey. The poorer students, who had no homes to which they could return, were quartered on the surrounding country,

and supplied, as usual, with food and attire from the revenues of the convent.

Sigibert, the son of a native of Tours, who had become one of the confidential secretaries of the celebrated Charlemagne; Rolust, a talented young Scot, from the Dal Riada of Albany; O'Haedha, Kenric, the Danaan, and the Fearbolg already spoken of, with the spirited young Artri, the only son of the monarch of that name who at this time held the throne of Leath Mogha, and one of whose palaces was in the adjacent city of Luimneach, were the most distinguished, by rank and talent, of those who remained during the summer months at Muingharid. Under the charge of one or two members of the community, they were permitted to make excursions to those districts in the neighbourhood which even still continue to attract the admiration of travellers; to the winding shores and woody creeks of Rinn Maoilin, to the sunny isles of the Sionann, the groves of Cairbre Aodhba, and other summer clad retreats.

One morn, while they were projecting an excursion on foot to the beautiful woodland and city of Athdara, which lay not farther than a forenoon's walk toward the south, a guard of gallóglachs, bearing the Dal Cassian banber, and headed by a toiseach, arrived at the college. It was soon understood that they came for the purpose of escorting the young prince of Leath Mogha, already mentioned, to the palace of his father. Kenric, inquiring from the Danaan the cause of this unexpected event, was informed that the sister of the monarch had died on the preceding day, and that the prince was summoned home to attend the funeral rites. While they were speaking, the young prince, in tears, and accompanied by the military leader, passed the spot where they were standing. The Danaan continued to inform the Anglo-Saxon that the deceased princess was the wife of the descendant of a Druid race, who was him-

self the first of his name that had embraced the doctrines of the new religion.* He was the brother, he said, of a Druid chief, who still maintained his ancient habits and belief, in the interior of the country, and obstinately refused to admit any attempt at innovation on his secluded territory. No Christian was allowed to set foot upon the soil, and although the chieftain made his appearance in regular form at the triennial Feis, or national assembly at Teamair,† yet he persisted in upholding, within his own remote dominion, the Druid laws, the Druid customs, and the rites of the Druidical belief. This narrative which he had learned from the young prince himself, the Danaan communicated in a confidential tone, while Kenric, devouring its remarkable details, accompanied him to the convent gate.

The excursion to Athdara took place before the return of Artri to the college. The party consisted of the young Gaul Sigibert, the Danaan, the Fearbolg, Rolust, the Northumbrian, and two monks, who walked apart conversing with each other. O'Haedha, whose turn it was to attend in the refectory of strangers, was unable to accompany them in their walk. The old tales of Webba, now so long forgot, came back into the mind of Kenric as he followed the other students, and thought of the Druid chieftain; of his brother, who had married the sister of the monarch, and the untimely dissolution of their union. The morning was serene and soft, and the students, after rambling through the city, and satisfying their curiosity by inspecting the shops of the artificers and other places worthy of attention, repaired to the banks of the winding and sallow-fringed Maig, to enjoy the exercise of swimming. Perceiving a great concourse of people around the eastern gate of the little city, they were informed that the funeral of the deceased

* See Note 15.

† See Note 36.

princess was expected to pass through, on its way to the celebrated abbey of Caisiol,* where it was to be interred. Before they left the place, Kenric had the satisfaction of witnessing the melancholy procession. A party of Dal Cassian gallóglachs preceded the carbud which contained the corpse, and which was followed by another, holding the widowed husband and his daughter, who seemed scarcely entered on the age of girlhood. So deeply was the imagination of the Northumbrian impressed by the spectacle, that for nearly a week after Elim observed that he was not the same in his sports and studies.

On the return of Artri, Kenric regarded him with an interest such as he had not felt before. It happened that both the prince and the Northumbrian were obliged to attend on the same morning in the refectory of strangers, an apartment in which all travellers were provided with refreshment and repose for a day and night. The duties of attending on the strangers, of serving them at meals, providing them with water and napkins for their hands, and washing their feet before they went to rest, were taken in turn by the students in the abbey, both as an exercise of humility, and a means of accustoming them to the offices of charity. As they entered the refectory, Artri said to the Northumbrian:

"Thou wilt have some friends of mine amongst the guests to-day."

"What friends?" said Kenric.

"A cousin, and a kind of uncle."

"Indeed?"

"They are on their way to the mountains in some distant territory, where I shall see no more of them perhaps for years."

"What! leave thy father's court, and the land of the Dal Cais?"

* Cashel.

“Yes ; and although I had rather lose my hand than lose my cousin, I like her father’s resolution.”

He said no more, and Kenric, though with curiosity highly excited, was unwilling to ask questions. Soon after the brother of the Druid entered with his daughter, and Kenric, while he served them at their morning meal, in company with a number of guests of every description, who were placed according to their rank at table, perused their features and persons with the keenest interest. The father was of a cheerful, though somewhat pale countenance, with a staid religious expression in his manner and aspect, though unmingled with the least severity or sternness. The daughter had the large dark eyes and hair of her country, with that peculiar air of liveliness, affection, and domestic reserve, by which the women of Inisfail appeared to mingle the vivacity of Sigibert’s countrywomen with the sobriety of those of Kenric. After their departure, which took place immediately on the termination of the morning meal, Kenric heard it rumoured, amongst the students, that both father and daughter had departed in extreme poverty ; that the former had refused to retain any longer the slightest claim to any of those possessions which he had held together with the deceased princess, and was now on the way to his native territory, in the same condition as when he had left it, with the exception of his altered faith and the young companion of his widowhood, whom his Dal Cassian consort had bequeathed him. All these circumstances strongly excited the interest of Kenric. Time, however, rolled by. The severities of study, and the pursuit of active recreation, checked the ramblings of imagination ; and the tendency to romance, which this story had nearly called forth again within his mind, was checked once more in its commencement.

CHAPTER XI.

AT sixteen years of age, Elim, the young Ithian chief, was transferred from the college of Muingharid, to the military school at Teamair. On returning from a ramble through the Deochain Neassan, Kenric was astonished to see a magnificent carbud, attended by a large body of horse, drawn up at the gates of the college ; but his distress may be imagined when he was given to understand that they were intended to convey his friend Elim from the place, for the space of two whole years. At the expiration of that period it was proposed that he should return, in order to complete his education previous to his final return to his native shore of Inbhersceine.

Having made his adieus, Elim ascended the carbud, and was driven away, leaving lonesomeness behind him, with his superiors, his companions, and most of all with Kenric. At the military school he underwent a course of study and of discipline equally severe as at Muingharid, though different in its kind. The number of pupils was considerable, though not so great as at Muingharid ; for as it was not only the exercise, but the science of war that was taught in this academy, the disciples were taken solely from the ranks of the royal and the noble. At day-break, the blast of a stoc awoke the active community, within a short time after which, under a stated penalty, the students were compelled to appear dressed and armed on the field, when, after a general inspection of arms and accoutrements, they proceeded to their daily exercise. Some whirled the Crann-tabhaill, a kind of sling, a weapon of deadly advantage in the ancient wars of the isle, which was laden, not with stones, but with balls cast for the purpose, of the same brazen matter that was used for the blades of their cutting weapons, and

sometimes for the heads of javelins and spears. Others practised at a painted target, with the diminutive hemp-stringed bow* and piercing arrow, which, next to the scian, formed the most fatal weapon of the kerne and light-armed horse. Some flung the dart, the javelin, and the spear. Some fenced with the heavy sword and cian, and learned at the same time how to use the wicker sciath for their own defence, and render it most unavailing to the safety of their opponent. For some hours, about noon, they studied in their own apartments the various class-books necessary to their profession, amongst which that of Sedna Jonnarraidh, or of the Stipends, the celebrated Ard-righ, who is said to be the author of the first treatise on military tactics that ever was written, held a chief place. The afternoon was devoted to the management of the horse, and the day concluded, as at Muingharid, by public instruction and a general examination. The students were, moreover, initiated not only into the use, but the manufacture, of their weapons, and an armourer's forge was erected within the precincts of the college, for the purpose of affording them practice in this laborious branch of their art. They were, moreover, obliged, after the manner of the Roman legionaries, to grind their own flour, and dress their own food, and even to make their own attire ; for the college only supplied them with the raw material of every article of diet and of clothing. Elim, who was not ignorant of those exercises when he left Rath-Aedain, became ere long proficient in the whole. But their course of instruction was extended to a still more comprehensive scale.

The college comprised a vast extent of ground of every description, situate on either side of that unhappy stream whose name has since become the watch-word of disunion in the luckless isle through which it flows. The

* See Note 3.

land consisted of woodland, crag, and marsh, together with one or two small islets, which lay in the bed of the river. Here the students were made to exercise in mock encounters, and even, at stated seasons, to go through all the manœuvres and adventures of a regular campaign. Sometimes they were employed in forming *duns* or *raths*, and other fortifications ; and sometimes in attacking those of the adverse party. They were accustomed to dress their food on the field ; and, on particular occasions, to spend whole nights in the open air, and, in the severest weather ; having no other covering than the great frieze mantle which Spenser calls the *house* of an Irishman. At eighteen years of age, Elim received from the hand of Niall, the Ard-rioh, the golden *fleasg* and collar of the *niadh-naisc* and took the vows which were necessary to his assuming the rank of *Curadh*, or knight.* He was next sent to the Lis-lachtin, a marine academy on the shores of the Sionann,† where he learned the management of the helm, the oar, the sail, and the uses of all kinds of shipping, from the small coiti to the single-sailed bark which ventured on the open seas.

Thus hardened in mind and frame, and fitted for a life of activity and danger, Elim returned, at the close of his nineteenth year, to receive the last instructions of his earliest masters. Proficient in the knowledge of his country's history, its geography, its laws, its resources, and its wants, he had determined, even from boyhood, to devote his life to its improvement : and this direction of his mind and feelings had already given an air of noble energy and decision to his manner, his speech, and his deportment, which, on their re-union, impressed Kenric with a sentiment of admiration, mingled with a painful sense of growing inferiority. The young Northumbrian, it is true, had not suffered the interval to pass away without dis-

* See Note 3.

† See Note 24. Lis-lachtin.

inction. He had written poems, which attracted the applause of all who read them, and he had also manifested considerable skill in argument and subtlety of intellect on metaphysical subjects ; but his mind was still unoccupied by any steady purpose, and his fancy still unregulated. Both friends, at meeting, were struck by the change which the growth of character and time had occasioned.

Summer, the period of the annual recess at the college, had begun to open, when Elim (already entered on his twentieth year), completed the course of instruction originally laid down for him. On the morning of the young Ithian's departure, Kenric accompanied him through the woods, from the city where, as they advanced in youth, they had taken up their residence, to the convent gate, in order that he might bid farewell to the aged abbot and the regent. The sound of the perpetual choir broke on their ears as they advanced, and at the same time the morning sun darted his first fresh light from the mountains of Shior Muimhean. While they paused, with their faces turned toward Luimneach, the voices of the religious were heard distinctly chaunting the words of Sedulius,

“ A solis ortus cardine,”

which had for ages before saluted the awakening dawn in many a similar retreat. The young friends looked and listened in silence, enjoying the delicious scene with that exquisite happiness untroubled minds can feel in contemplating the excellence of nature. While they stood thus silent, a troop of the Dal Cassian Marc Suadh, or armed horsemen, rode by, their brazen weapons gleaming in the sunshine, and their sanguine banner waving in the wind. The eye of Kenric followed the bloody hand and boastful motto, until distance had rendered it illegible.

“ I could bear parting better,” said the Northumbrian, at length breaking silence, “ if there were any hope of

our ever meeting again on the same terms as we have done. But we are about to be separated, not only by space, but by condition. In the college we were Elim and Kenric only, but now thou art a prince, and I shrink back again into the son of a Northumbrian grazier. Well, it is vain to talk of that; but I had rather hold any rank beneath thy banner, than be the richest grazier in the Dene, or the wisest scholar in Cair Grant. I have longed to be a soldier ever since I witnessed the muster at the Feis of Caisiol, in my journey hither, with old Vusefræa for my guide. (It is so long since I have seen him now, I cannot call him rigid as I used.) Up with the sun at morn, sweeping along the boundaries, now lost for days together in trackless woods and lonely fastnesses, now shining among the nobles and protectors of the land in the banquet halls of Teamar or of Cruachain, now shouting in the field, now hanging on the musical praise of the fleá at his evening festival, what life is so delightful, so full of variety and action? With the example of thy great ancestor, the founder of thy sept before thee, and the hearts and weapons of that sept to aid thee in resembling him, what mayst thou not accomplish? while I, thanks to my mother and Vusefræa, must waste my life in study."

"Thou entirely deceivest thyself," said Elim, after a pause, "in supposing that because the knowledge of arms is necessary to my place it shall be the leading theme of my ambition. My views are very different."

"What are they, then?" asked Kenric.

Elim seemed for some time absorbed in reflection, at length, signifying to his friend that they should walk forward, while he spoke, he related to him the scene which had taken place between his mother and himself, in his boyhood, and which had made a deep impression on his mind.

"The more I have seen and thought since then," he

continued, "the more confirmed have I become in the determination I had formed, almost upon the instant, to obey the words of Macha. Yes, dear unhappy isle," he said, bending down, to the surprise of Kenric, and kissing the soil on which they trod, "I rule but a small portion of thy territory, but from this hour I devote myself, my mind, my knowledge, all that I am, and all that I command, to the welfare and the glory of the whole."

So saying, Elim hastened to bid farewell to the superiors of the college, while Kenric, hardly knowing whether to smile or to admire, remained near the gateway to witness his departure.

CHAPTER XII.

A GREAT number of students were assembled to look upon the splendid carbud and large body of horse, which waited to convey the accomplished Ithian to his small dominion, and to bid a long farewell to their old schoolfellow. Having received the benediction of his college superiors, who warmly exhorted him to persevere in his course, while his heart was kindling at their praise, he left the college for the last time, and hastened, an accomplished scholar, to the gateway where his mother's messengers awaited him. The students pressed upon him with ardent expressions of attachment and regret, and cheered him loudly as he drove away.

Before he had proceeded far on the road which led towards Inherseine, Elim turned for an instant to look upon the sunlit abbey. Since he had received the summons of his parent to return to his paternal roof, the idea of leaving a place where he had led a life so full of occupation and of even-minded diligence, had daily become more painful. Objects before regarded carelessly, as

things familiar, grew interesting, now that he was about to lose them. His glance fell nowhere that it was not reminded of some past impression of pleasure; some lesson of virtue taught; some word of commendation from his instructors; some little self-denial, practised for the pleasure of a companion, or in compliance with a cherished principle. The sight of his schoolfellows, at a distance, hastening to and from the abbey, the view of the remote mountains, the murmur of the little city of letters, the calm religious stillness of the convent shades, the sound of its eternal choir, now that he was about to part with them all for life, deepened on his affections to a degree that even amounted to anguish. From this mood of reflection, however, he was aroused by the voice of Moyel, reminding him that they must pass the Dal Cassian frontier before night. Resuming the action of the reins, and followed by his troop of gallóglachs,* who looked at their young chieftain with delight, Elim hastened on his journey without further delay.

In a few days, Elim passed, with his escort, the lonely and broken Riada, that frowned upon the tranquil surface of Loch Léné; the fair valleys of Glenn Fais and of Glenn Scota (made interesting by the tombs of the Milesian heroines); and entered at length on the wild and rocky territories of the race of Ith. For a long space he now found himself encompassed by scenery of the most rugged and profitless description, mountains without sublimity, and valleys without beauty, breaking upon him in dreary succession during the lapse of his last day's journey. Resigning the useless carbud, he now cheered his sure-footed hobbie across the broken steeps of Esk, a defile of that gloomy range of mountains, not unaptly termed, by some topographers, the Vallis Juncosa. Now he passed a lonely cluster of skin-thatched peillices, which

* See Note 3.

here assumed the title of a brugh, with a few spots of tillage reclaimed from the waste, and herds of sheep and cattle grazing among the crags. Sometimes a herring gull, or heron, floating through the fields of air above his head, indicated his nearer approach to those coasts on which his home was situate, and at intervals the cry of a gamet, winging its way towards its nest in the lonely Scéilig, startled the echoes amongst the barren excavations of the mountain. More than once, also, his eye encountered, in the extensive solitude, the solitary figure of a monk, or lonely anchorite, hastening forward on his mission, or tilling the little garden that supplied his hermitage. Towards evening, as he rode along within sight of the mountains of Sliabh Miscaisi (or Miscish), some traces of a kindlier soil, and the scent of more familiar airs, began to greet him on his way. The fir and overgrown buckthorn no longer held solitary dominion in the wilds. The heath was diversified by the white-blossomed mountain avens, the tormentil, and other wild flowers. Clusters of the smaller shrubs became more frequent in the clefts of rocks and along the mountain sides. The way ran coiling among broken defiles, presenting an intermixture of rock and foliage, of beauty and abruptness. Once more the lake-haunting arbutus, which had not visited his sight since he left at morning the shores of the dark Loch Léné, now waved its pointed leaves above him from some overhanging rock, and seemed to welcome him again to a new region of beauty and delight. At length his hobbie, with less laborious step and drooping head, descended an easier road. Here, the sun struck his level light through the top of some old oak, or lofty yew, upon his right, while the evening silence was broken by the full round note of the song-thrush, concealed in some shaded thicket, or by the silvery trill of the wood-lark, which here, like the nightingale, prolonged its music far into the night. A fresher wind soon rustled amid the

beeches, and that indescribable murmur, almost inaudible to the senses, yet filling the whole air, which the ocean sends forth in its calmest hours, announced his approach to the sea-side. At length, the leafy screen vanished behind him, and the varied shores, the tufted points and scattered islands of his native place, broke suddenly in all their sunset beauty on his sight. Before him, the bright green waters of the majestic inlet crossed by a glancing light, from the still distant sea, now broke in glittering wavelets on a sunlit beach, and now rolled dark and silent at the foot of some aged rock. Far in the distance on a wooded hill which overlooked the bay, arose the walls of Rath-Aedain, the patrimonial dwelling of the young Ithian, a building composed in part of stone and part of wood. It was guarded by ramparts of earth and trunks of trees, which, being now covered with a screen of grass and wild flowers, gave the appearance of beauty to what was meant for terror. The eminence on which it stood was sequestered in a wooded and rocky glen which opened on the bay of Inbher Sceine. A stream flowed by it, spanned by two bridges not far remote from each other, between which the water was dilated into a dark and waveless pool. One of those bridges was upheld by a lofty semi-circular arch, and being of an old date, was covered with a graceful drapery of ivy, bramble, and other creeping shrubs, which drooped downward to meet their own reflection in the stream. At summer times, such as the present, its battlements were gay with fox-glove, briar-blossoms, and other wild flowers. The other bridge was a ruder structure of wood, serving to connect the main track with a bye-path that led to the foot of Rath-Aedain.

Such was the home which Elim had left in his boyhood, and to which he now returned. He was met at the pallisading which surrounded the foot of the hill, by Clothra, the mother of Moyel, and his own nurse, who gave

him the first "cead failté" on his return, and informed him, on their way to the ramparts, that the sails of the Finn Geinte had been seen in the offing only a few days before. Before Elim could make any observation upon this occurrence, he saw his mother, with a smiling countenance awaiting him afar upon the threshold of the dwelling. Putting spurs to his horse, he hastened to the gateway, where he alighted with the assistance of a dal-tin, and advanced through the crowds of armed men who filled the Rath, to receive the greeting of his only parent.

Tall, beyond the usual stature of her sex, with the grace of years and the dignity of station mingled in her demeanour, the protectress of the sept of O'Headha received her long-absent child into her arms. While she laid her hand upon his head, and looked into his features as if tracing in them some indistinct resemblance, Elim did not fail to remark that his mother's hair was grown greyer, and her hand more sinewy than when he had left home. Still, however, there was the same mild firmness of expression in her eye, and calm domestic contentedness of spirit in her smile, which even in his childhood had been to Elim like continual sunshine.

"Thou art welcome to us, Elim, and welcome in a needful time," she said. "How tall thou art, my boy, and manly, too? See, Clothra, ~~see~~ those shoulders."

"His father's all across," said Clothra, lifting her hand, "his father's brawn and sinew every limb. Let the Finn Geinte look to it; ay, and the great Dal Cáis, for all their bloody hand."

"His father's hair, his father's brow and eye," continued Macha. "My honey child; my Elim! Let us not enter yet. My brother, O'Driscoll, and his chiefs are in the Rath, and nothing there is heard but war and arms. His father's gait, too, Clothra. Such a warrior as he was thou wilt be, Elim; as brave, as good, as generous, —but wiser."

As she said these words, Macha laid her hand upon her brow, and lowered her countenance for some moments. Elim, who knew the cause of her dejection, maintained a respectful silence until the sudden cloud had left his mother's mind.

"The wily Baseg!" she exclaimed at length. "I say forgive him; may he be forgiven! But his deeds are manifest, and his treason deadly. False to his creed, his country, and his race, he has made it virtue to denounce his name, to mark him out for caution and avoidance. His country and his kin are both well rid of him. But let that subject rest. Moyel!" she continued, turning quickly to the seneschal, "and you, dear kinsmen, do you not see your chieftain's son returned? Give Elim the cead mílé failté.

The kerne and gallóglachs, who crowded the Rath, had only been waiting Macha's silence, and now greeted their young chieftain with shouts of welcome. All bared their heads, some flung their skenes and girdles in his path, and greeted him with gestures of the most ardent attachment. Elim, accustomed to the calm and moderated manners of the religious in his convent, was as much surprised as gratified by the eager and untutored affection of his kinsmen, and the fury that was in their very joy. He met them, however, in their own manner; returned their ardent greetings, and felt in the very depths of his heart the glow benevolence feels when conscious first of power to work its wishes.

"His father's child from head to foot," said Moyel, as Elim accompanied his mother into the Rath, "only kinder in the eye, like Macha."

"The very air of the head," said another, "and the fashion of pulling the green bonnet to the left. I would follow him to the world's end."

"Let him be whose son he will," said a grey-haired gallóglach, "and let him lead thee where he will, thou never

wert more willing to obey than he is ready and willing to command."

Accompanying his mother into the dwelling, Elim found it crowded with many faces of his kindred, which, though changed by time, he yet remembered well. Amongst those which most directly caught his eye, was that of O'Driscol, his uncle already mentioned, who was conversing familiarly with some of his more aged officers upon the favourite topic of arms.

At the moment when Elim and Macha made their appearance, several of the young officers had started from their places, on hearing the shouts outside, and were hastening to the doorway. They gave way, however, on perceiving Macha and her son, and suffered them to advance to the Sior Lamh.

"What youth is this?" said O'Driscol, looking on Macha as she placed Elim's hand in his. "Is it possible? Is this my little kinsman, Elim? My little warrior, whom I taught to use a javelin almost before his tongue. Those hands and limbs? that trunk? Is it possible? So it is; so it is; while we have been wearing our old frames in war, this youth has been shooting up as strong and fast as a young pine. Look hither! what a chest! Tut tut, this boy will thrash a score of Dal Cais yet. Dost thou remember me?"

"Surely I do, O'Driscol," answered Elim, "thee and the javelin too."

"Ah, but thou comest from Muingharid now, where thou last learned to use thy tongue in preference. Well, that is right. Letters and piety become a soldier. Well, well, the monks are right to make thee learned. Thy brain and heart are now complete in all their exercises. What, Elim?—Well, but there is something more that thou canst learn of such poor dunces as O'Driscol only. Could the abbot of Muingharid (with reverence be it spoken) teach thee to dart the spear, or whirl the

sling? Is there a monk in the college (without meaning any slight) who could leave a Dal Cais headless with one sweep of a scian? For books and rules the monks are very well, but I speak it not in scorn or disrespect, they are better teachers of peace than war, by far."

"I found them so, in truth," said Elim.

"Ay, didst thou, Elim? Well, let us not slight the religious for all that. What if this sword be hacked from heel to point against the shields of the Dal Cais, shall I despise the monk for his misfortune? There's many an honest man that never drew a blow in all his life. What if a monk be ignorant whether he should use the skene or javelin in a close encounter, he may have virtues we know nothing of? But we will teach thee how to use thy limbs."

"Thou'lt leave him in the Rath to guard the coasts against the Finn Geinte," said Macha.

"To guard the coasts against the Finn Geinte! against the fogs and vapours!" answered the Sior Lamh. "What canst thou know of war and government? To guard the coast? to prate and idle here with thee by the hearth while the kerne were sleeping underneath their mantles in the sunshine on the ramparts?"

"They slept not so, dear brother," said Macha, "when Baseg menaced all the sept with ruin."

"I thought we should hear of Baseg," said O'Driscoll; "I had as lief sit yonder with thy distaff in my hand, and teach thy maids to spin, as hear thee meddle in affairs of policy and war; or any of thy sex. Go twirl the wheel; go card the fleece; go turn the quern, good sister; but leave discourse of arms and government to those who are able to use and to direct them. A man and woman never yet changed places with dignity or with advantage."

"Thou art hard; thou art somewhat hard, dear brother," said Macha, smiling, "but thou hast reason."

While they sat conversing on topics of arms, or on familiar recollections of days gone by, numbers of the nearer members of the family appeared with their bright-faced congratulations, and the dance and song were shortly added to the amusements of the evening. Among the warmest, as well as the most skilful, Elim recognized the voice and instrument of the grey-headed Connla, the hereditary filea, or bard of the sept, accompanying himself in the following song of welcome :

I.

Falta volla ! falta volla !* welcome to the mountains !
Falta volla ! welcome to your native woods and fountains !
 To hear the harper play again—and the shouts that greet thee ;
Falta volla ! how it glads the widow's heart to meet thee !
Falta volla ! falta volla !
 Welcome to Rath-Aedain.

II.

Shule a volla ! † shule a volla ! through our parted island,
 Many a friend and foe hast thou in valley and in highland.
 But whene'er the friends are false—when the foes distress thee,
Shule a volla ! here are ready weapons to redress thee.
Shule a volla ! shule a volla !
 Shelter in Rath-Aedain.

III.

Ire a volla ! ‡ ire a volla ! far in Corca's valleys,
 When around the Bloody Hand the routed Dal Cais rallies ;
 When the groans of dying friends fill the air above thee,
Ire a volla ! there are hands and hearts to love thee.
Ire a volla ! ire a volla !
 Hasten to Rath-Aedain.

Elim rewarded the minstrel with more than the customary fee, and added to the gift the kindest inquiries for his welfare and that of his household; reminding him

* Properly *fáilte a bhailé* : (welcome home.)

† Properly *siubhail a bhailé* : (come home.)

‡ Properly *éirigh a bhailé*. (go home.)

of the evenings in which he had learned from him the use of the cruit, and listened to the songs of his ancestral fame. To these remembrances the old bard listened with a gratified smile, shaking his white hairs, touching with the lightest motion the strings of his clairsech, and saying from time to time "They are gone, *a ghradh*—he is dead—mayest thou be like them!"

After some converse, Elim was made known to the chiefs of his sept, with whom he was so soon to be associated in arms; to Ciaran, the young master of the horse; to Cairbre, the old and experienced toiseach, and others. He revisited with a delight that may be easily conceived all parts of the dwelling of his childhood, the hall of strangers, the garden, and the rest; after which he returned to spend an evening of festivity with his mother and her guests. Thus passed the evening of the young Ithian's return to his home. So joyous an occasion had not visited the dwelling since he had left it years before.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON closing his five-and-twentieth year, preparations were made for celebrating, in appropriate style, the entrance of Elim on the duties of his government. At an early hour on an appointed day, the valley of Rath-Aedain was crowded with the assembled members of the sept, of every age and condition, clad in their gayest attire, and bearing in their hands the boughs of trees, and banners of various hues. The sides of the undulating hills, the bridges, and the borders of the stream, were crowded with festal groups, and music sounded from many an instrument, now obsolete and forgotten as the fingers that awoke them. A council was held within the Rath, con-

sisting of the heads of the principal households in the territory, at which the claim of Elim to the government and title of O'HAEDHA* was discussed, and fully established. The gate of the Rath was then thrown open, and Elim, attired in a moss-dyed crimson robe, and with his head bare, appeared amongst the people, on foot, and followed by the principal officers of his household, who were to be likewise his assistants in the government. These were the aged Mac Firbis, who still retained his post of Ard Brehon, or chief lawyer;† Fearcaorb, the seanachie; the physician Finnghin,‡ whose three daltas, though long arrived at man's estate still continued to exercise the healing art under the superintendence of their old instructor, and whose solemnity of visage seemed to have increased with their years; Daithi, the *dresbdeartach*, or story-teller; Olioll, the crotarie, or harper; and Connla, the aged poet of the Rath. Thus accompanied, and followed by the people, Elim proceeded along the valley, until they arrived at a spot where rose a grassy mound, at no great distance from a large though low-roofed church. Here, standing on the summit of the hill, and in the sight of all the people, Elim took the oaths usually administered at the inauguration of the sovereigns of every degree, binding himself to protect religion, the laws, and to administer impartial justice. After the celebration of a solemn high mass, a consecrated wand of peeled osier was placed in the hand of the young chieftain by Fearcaorb, who, at the same instant, laid his girdle and barréad at his feet, and greeted him with the title of O'HAEDHA.* The word flew from lip to lip, and at length arose from the whole multitude in a shout that made the hills re-echo. Bursts of joyous music broke from the numerous bands that thronged the valley, and the chieftain was reconducted to the Rath, amid

* See Note 4.

† See Note 9.

‡ See Note 8.

loud and noisy demonstrations of general rejoicing. The day was enlivened with various amusements, and concluded with an entertainment of the most sumptuous kind.

Elim did not disappoint the hopes of his instructors and his friends. On assuming the government of his sept, he began to put in immediate execution those plans for its improvement which he had already formed. He established schools of general education throughout his territory, increasing the number of instructors by diminishing that of the brehons, or lawyers. He admitted to an equal participation in these advantages the few Druid families* residing within his boundaries, well knowing that the surest mode of disarming prejudice, is by acquiring confidence. He enforced the strictest penalties against all dissensions and quarrels between families, a vice which, perhaps more than any other circumstance, has contributed to the misery, and eventually to the ruin, of the island. He punished drunkenness as a felonious offence, holding those in some degree answerable for the worst breach of social order, who voluntarily deprive themselves of the natural moral safeguards. He took little pains to encourage foreign commerce, but a great deal in the promotion of internal industry, knowing that the one will follow of itself in the footsteps of the other; and he encouraged and protected religious foundations, being convinced, that, next to intolerance, the worst policy which a government can adopt is the neglect of religion.

Nor did Elim, in his immediate circle, fail to secure the love and admiration of his associates. He soon discovered by experience the truth of the axiom, that of all the means useful for effecting a reformation amongst men, personal example is far the most efficacious: and, though it may sometimes fail of success, without it not

* See Note 15.

even miracles can work the change. He manifested, in the discharge of his civil and military duties, the same firmness and alacrity of mind which he had already manifested in his scholastic studies; and became, ere long, as much respected and beloved as he had been at Muingharid, at Teamar, and at Lis-lachtin. Yet he was not without censurers. His love of peace made the young accuse him of deficiency in spirit, and his changes in the government seemed to the old and prejudiced to augur self-conceit, and a desire of innovation. But Elim proceeded steadily in his course, and the lapse of two years gave, in their good effects, convincing proof of the wisdom of his measures.

The recollection of the inhuman outrage in which his father lost his life, pressed frequently upon the mind of Elim; but he rejected with abhorrence, the suggestions of revenge which were thrown out from time to time by many of the elder warriors of the sept. Notwithstanding the strong censure of O'Driscoll, who had long since returned to his father's residence, Macha's desire (no unfrequent occurrence), was the one eventually adopted with regard to the scene of the young chieftain's duties. Except, however, so far as the preservation of internal discipline was concerned, the life which he pursued, was untroubled and inactive, and for nearly two years after his return, the red deer of the hills were the only sufferers to his new accomplishments.

One forenoon, while he rode with a party of his companions in arms near the foot of the Sliabh Miscaisi range where he had been tracing out the plan of a new road, the conversation turned on the conduct of Moyel, Elim's seneschal, who, during an incursion upon some pasture lands, of which he had the charge some days before, had prudently secreted himself, while the marauders drove the cattle.

"Did'st thou not cleave his roguish head in two?" said

Ciaran, the hare-brained young captain of horse, who rode upon the left of Elim.

"Poor fellow ! why should I do so ?" answered Elim ; "why should not the poor fellow save his bones from breaking ; and why should I give a timid shepherd the punishment of a timid soldier ?"

"Thou, an O'Haedha," said he on the left, "and tolerate a coward ?"

"I say, hear Elim," said Cairbre, the grey-haired warrior, who rode close behind, "it is a chieftain's praise to save the blood of the sept."

"It was not such maxims," said the former speaker, looking back over his shoulder, "that kept up the clash of arms for a year and a day at Fionntraigh harbour."

"In good truth," said the elder warrior, "that year and a day was a year at least too long, if it ever passed at all, a matter which I strongly doubt. O'Haedha is no Daeri Donn, no Fionn Mac Cumhaill, although he lives not far from Fionntraigh. He fights to save life, not to waste it. But, to please thee, good Moyel, should have killed the whole troop, single-handed, if not eaten them."

"Well," said the captain of the hobbeliers, "I would that good might come of all this meddling in peace and policy. Your civil government is to me the knottiest subject for a ruler ; it is so difficult to keep people united when they are at peace. In war they must stand by each other, and no thanks. I had rather lead a dozen townships in the field than govern one at home."

"It is therefore I made thee that thou art," said Elim, smiling.

"And what does O'Haedha hope to effect by peace ?" said Ciaran, "except to encourage such outrages as those in question."

"My plan is," said Elim, "and I desire your hearty concurrence and favorable construction : first, to confine myself to the defence of my own territory, to strengthen

it by improving the character and condition of its inhabitants. Next, to prevail on Artrigh, the monarch of Leath Mogha, to use his influence in promoting union among the princes of this portion of the isle, by establishing some general system of trade ; and afterwards, when I take my place in the national Feis of Teamar, to use all my exertions for the amelioration of the laws of property and succession, of thanistry and gavel-kind. Could I but see these changes once accomplished, I should die contented in the thought of leaving my native land united and secure, and no longer exposed by internal discords to the danger of foreign conquest. If this be accomplished, Inisfail may yet continue prosperous and happy ; if not, she will become the prey of some foreign invader, and never again, perhaps, see sovereigns of her own."

"Thou designest great things," said Ciarau. "I would they may not play thee false."

"Let his people play him true," said Cairbre, "and he will soon become more terrible in his love of peace than any of the bardic phantoms of Fionntraigh in their thirst of gore and action."

"Truce to the argument, good captains, both of you," said Elim, "for yonder comes Moyel, shouting with all his force. Hold ! What is that he waves ? A broken spear ! Away, they are returned upon the lands—he points to the hills. Follow—fairé ! Away ! Rouse all the kerne !*—Come with me, gallóglachs ! Away !"

So saying, and reiterating the war cry of his sept till it resounded and was re-echoed on the farther shores of the bay, he gave his horse full rein, and galloped, followed by the troop of slingers and gallóglachs immediately behind him, in the direction of the hill where Moyel stood. Scarcely waiting to hear from him an account of the disaster which had taken place, he hastened forward

* See Note 83.

on the route of the retreating plunderers, the greater part of whom, on his approach, formed themselves into line in order to receive him, while a small party continued to drive on the captured cattle. The dress and arms of the enemy pronounced them strangers, not only to the eye of Elim, but to all his companions. The conflict which ensued was short and fierce. Numbers and place were both in Elim's favour, and, before an hour elapsed, he had either slain or made prisoners of all the troop but one, a young warrior, better armed and mounted than the rest, who, on seeing the cattle rescued, and his men defeated, quickly gave over the single-handed contest with the young Ithian chief, and fled toward the mountains. Elim, accompanied by his two companions already named pursued him into a long and lonely defile that led to the woody interior of the country. His speed did not diminish when he beheld the stranger, still far apart, approaching the Glens of Oaks, on the frontier of his patrimonial territory, beyond which his father had fallen a victim to the Hooded People. He still gave a loose rein to his horse, nor did he slacken speed until, after gradually gaining ground on his pursuer, the stranger disappeared amongst the cliffs at a great distance, and was seen no more.

By this time Elim found that he likewise had far outstripped his own companions, and rode over a wide stony track of mountain ground with no other companion than a large-limbed hound, which had kept pace with his master during the pursuit. The sun had journeyed far into the west, and Elim looked back upon the barren gaps and jutting rocks which had passed so swiftly before him in the ardour of the pursuit, but which, now that his time was shortened, seemed as if extended to a weary length. He thought of waiting for his companions, but then he had passed so many clefts and valleys since he left them, that it was as unlikely they could find, as that he could re-

trace, his way. Proceeding onward, he found himself ere long ascending a rocky pass which separated two stupendous mountains. Osgur, the hound, was standing on the side of a craggy steep, on which might be discerned the traces of a broken pathway. The dog looked back from the height, and wagged his tail invitingly; but the ascent was too steep even for the mountain-bred hobbie which Elim rode. As the sun sunk, the shadows slowly covered the eastern side of the wild pass, and Elim, making fast his hobbie where he stood, ascended the path already mentioned, in order to command a more extensive view of his position. The dog, which seemed only to await this movement of compliance, bounded gaily up the steep, and, after some time, disappeared upon the other side. As Elim, after a toilsome ascent, approached the sunlit summit of the crag, the sweet air which arose from the other side seemed to announce a scene of softer character than those which he had passed, and so indeed it proved. Standing on the summit of the craggy height, he beheld beneath him a deep coom, or valley, environed by three gigantic mountains. That on which he stood was broken, craggy, and in some places precipitous. On his right arose another, less rocky, but gloomier, loftier, and grander in its character. Between these and the third, which extended at greater length on the opposite side, the wooded vale lay tranquil and beautiful, cherishing with its luxuriant verdure the feet of its gigantic guardians. The mountain pass on his right was intersected by a river which, running into the vale, formed in the midst a wide and stilly lake. At the far extremity of the recess appeared an outlet to the open country through which the stream, after resting in the quiet bosom of the vale, recommenced its broken course, and disappeared amid the windings of the crag and woodland. The feature which chiefly fixed the attention of the young chieftain was a spot of land almost surrounded by the

waters of the lake, and only connected with the opposite shore by a narrow strip of ground, which never rose sufficiently high above the surface of the water to break the insular character of the little spot. Here, from a dense and lofty grove of oak issued several broad and beaten pathways, some leading to the water's edge, where some currachs were fastened to the shore, and some to the neck of land already described. In the midst of this grove arose the dark and shrub-covered roof of some apparently extensive building; but what it might be the distance and the intervening foliage prevented Elim from discerning with distinctness. There appeared no other dwelling within his view, nor did he lose much time in looking for any. An object of more quickening interest to him had already arrested his attention, for the height afforded him an extensive view of the tract of country he had crossed. Perceiving that he might more speedily regain his own frontier by following the track of the river, crossing the valley, and issuing forth at the outlet already mentioned, he hastily returned to the place where he had left the animal. The time appeared just sufficient to enable him to reach his home by daylight, and he had no cause to know that the land on which he stood was the territory of any avowed or suspected enemy of his house. Leading his hobbie down the steep, he remounted and rode along the borders of the lake at a slow pace, for the animal was already weary. The beauty of the place seemed still more exquisite as he entered the immediate precincts of the retreat. The trees seemed alive with various singing birds, and although the wind was high and loud upon the mountain top, and the heat of the sun's rays distressing, though at evening, the air within the vale was cool, delicious, and refreshing. Notwithstanding his haste, he had curiosity enough to enter the little islet already mentioned, and to explore its woody recesses. As he approached the oaken grove, he

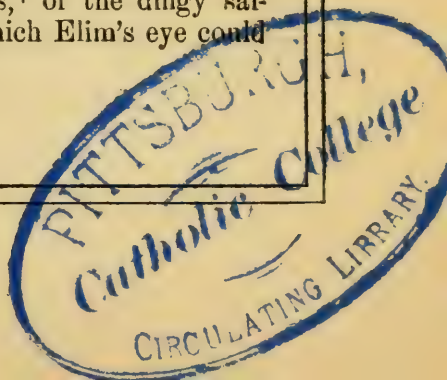
saw in the centre an open space before the unbarred gateway of a building which had somewhat the character of a place of worship, though not such as Elim was accustomed to frequent. The walls were of oak planks smoothed with the plane, and the roof of reeds. In the centre of a small green on one side, appeared a huge pyre of wood, arranged as if for burning. No human being, however, appeared in sight, and this, connected with the stillness of the place and the lonely beauty of the surrounding scenery, gave an air of enchantment to the whole that made Elim think of his young Northumbrian schoolfellow. The open gateway as he ventured farther gave him a view of the richly decorated interior of the building. On a small shrine of crystal, far within, were painted the effigies of the sun, moon, and several of the greater stars. These indicated a Druidical temple, and Elim suddenly called to mind that this eve was the first of November, the day of the annual festival of Samhuin,* the great goddess of the planet-worshippers. With this remembrance a suspicion of a more startling nature darted on his mind, and feeling involuntarily for his arms, he hurried from the place with more anxiety of mind than he had yet experienced. Riding hastily along the lake, he soon reached and penetrated the outlet before described. But the consequences of the day's adventure were not so soon to terminate.

He had left the valley more than two miles behind, and now entered a close and wooded pass, which he knew to be at no great distance from his own frontier. Here, while he guided his hobbie with a careful rein over the uneven ground, he was startled by a sudden noise in the hazel bushes which he had passed. Before he could look round a heavy figure had leaped upon the horse behind him, a pair of gaunt and muscular arms had compressed

* See Note 15. On the Druids.

his waist, the reins were snatched from his grasp, and with a violent effort, the new rider turned the frightened horse aside, and sped rapidly away in a different direction from that in which he had been travelling. The Ithian endeavoured to turn and look at least upon this strange assailant, but in vain. The iron embrace that pressed upon his sides made resistance a folly, and he yielded to his fate in silence. Meantime the startled hobbie, with a vigour all renewed by terror, stretched fleetly along the wild, and reached at length what seemed to Elim to be another valley not far from that in which the temple stood, but populous and cultivated. That building was no longer to be seen, but the river with a noisier and more broken current, babbled along the borders of many a little garden and many a low peillice. One dwelling in particular, of a larger size than the rest, attracted his attention. It was built of darkened oak, and roofed with skins of wolves and other animals of the forest. It stood on a small but lofty island, formed by the divided stream, and protected on all sides by a barrier of raised earth, bound firmly together with the trunks of felled trees, and surrounded by a kind of rude pallsading, interlaced with woodbine and other wandering shrubs. A wooden drawbridge of unhewn timber crossed one arm of the parted water, from the entrance of the Dun to the brink of a small but wild and broken cliff, and was reflected in the darkened stream that flowed more softly underneath the simple fabric. Hither the unknown companion of his headlong journey directed the steps of Elim's hobbie, renewing his peal shouts of "Donn Dairé go bragh ! Conn Créther a-bo !" and reined up the obedient animal amongst a crowd of people, who received him with exclamations of welcome and surprise. Their hooded cloaks,* of the dingy saffron dye of the arbutus, beneath which Elim's eye could

* See Note 15.



sometimes catch a glimpse of the green girdle and the secret scian, gave him to understand that he had fallen into the hands of the same sept, a party of whom he had defeated a few hours before. All warrior as he was, it was with a feeling of anxiety that he found himself a prisoner of the Hooded People.

After addressing a few words to some of the men, in an accent which prevented Elim from distinctly comprehending what they meant, his captor, a man of huge and bony shape, conducted him across the bridge, and into the sequestered dun. Casting, as he entered, a look of anxiety back to his ill-treated hobbie, he observed that one of the men had flung a cloak over his reeking sides, and was conducting him round the building, as it seemed, to shelter and repose.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE domestic picture which was revealed to him as he crossed the threshold had no less of novelty for Elim's eyes than the external features of the building.* He found himself in a lofty and extensive room, the walls and ceiling of which were decorated with sculpture not inferior to that with which the mountaineers of Norway and Sweden are accustomed to this day to decorate their houses. A large fire of turf and timber burned at one end, near which, on a beechen tripod, sat an old man, his many-coloured garments hanging in numerous and not ungraceful folds around his aged limbs, his grey head slightly drooping, and his beard, which still retained its hardy brown, descending nearly to his girdle. Two or three somewhat less aged figures sat near him, one rest-

* See Note 25. Houses in ancient Erin.

ing on a sally framed harp, or clairsach, which stood between his knees, the others silently enjoying the warmth which played upon their sunken features, and looking towards the door. A young girl knelt near the feet of the old man first mentioned, cooking some wheaten cakes upon the embers, and a copper cauldron of great size was suspended over the fire. On the opposite side, seated on a tripod somewhat lower than that of the old man, appeared a maiden veiled, with a silver cross hanging at her waist, and attended by two handmaids, who stood close behind, examining the prisoner's dress and arms with looks of curiosity and wonder. A number of men and women sat or stood on the rushes which strewed the earthen floor, and hushed their murmuring converse as the stranger entered.

Leaving Elim near the threshold, his captor now advanced toward the old man first described. Throwing back his hood, and taking off his skene and girdle, in token of vassalage, he held for a little time a conversation with the Ard-Drai (for such had Elim already conjectured the old man to be). He was unable to hear its import, but he could judge by the slightly gathered brows and reproving head-shake of the old man, and by the disappointed aspect of the younger, that the latter had not met with an approving reception. Returning to Elim, with a discontented brow, he conducted him with no gentle grasp to the feet of the Ard-Drai, and, resuming his hood and girdle, turned sullenly away.

It would be difficult to furnish any idea of the feelings which arose in Elim's breast as he gazed on the old man, by whose hand, he made no doubt, his father had been deprived of life in the glow of youth and happiness.

Mastering his emotions, however, by a powerful effort, he awaited in fixed silence the first word of his host.

The aged Druid, after surveying him for some moments with a look of scrutiny, said :

"Thou art an Ithian?"

"I am," said Elim.

"Dost thou know," continued the Ard-Drai, "what sept it is into whose hands thou hast fallen?"

"I have often been taught," said Elim, "to beware of the Hooded People* of the Hills."

"Thou hast got thy lesson ill then," said the Ard-Drai, "to be found journeying through their chief retreat alone, and uninvited. Thou hast the gentle eye of an O'Haedha. Knowest thou what cause we have to love thy race?"

"Not less, at least," said Elim, "than we to love the Hooded Men, for any recollected good or evil. A murderer's sword once left our house without a ruler, and if justice has been defeated of her victim, we may thank thy tribe that sheltered the assassin."

"Thou art as free of thy speech as of thy life," said the Ard-Drai, "to bring the name of Conall to my memory. Between their friendship and their enmity, thy tribe has made us suffer grievously. If thou hast so much cause to doubt our sept, why art thou here through thine own negligence?"

"I came here," replied Elim, "not by my own knowledge or design, but straying in pursuit of a runaway carrowe, who would have driven our cattle off the lands."

The Ard-Drai now was silent for so long a time, that Elim became weary of his situation. He deemed himself fortunate in the Druid's ignorance of his real rank, but was astonished at the tone and manner in which he spoke of Conall. They were rather those of a person wronged and still unredressed, than of one who had wreaked upon his foe the last vengeance that human hatred can inflict. Desirous of effecting his liberation before the return of the single fugitive should render his chance of impunity

* See Note 15.

more doubtful, he demanded his freedom, reminding the old Druid that the septs were not at war.

"Whatever cause we had," said the Ard-Draithe, "to blame thy race, that now is past away—and for thy creed, it is true that it has wrought our shame and ruin. The nain is silent in our trilithons*—the rod of the Draí no longer tells where springs the living water—the clouds that move in the air no longer shape their masses into prophetic forms, as they were wont to do for the instruction of our fathers; and the temple of Bel is profaned by Christian worshippers. He numbers now few votaries in Inisfail, but yet the brazen gen was never drawn to work nor to oppose the change. We have but to thank our own defective brethren that we are few in number and feeble in means."

Elim did not see any use in replying to this speech, with the tone of which he was still more astonished than before, and the Ard-Draí after a pause, continued:—

"Nevertheless, I cannot change the laws of Coom-nan-Druadh. Thou hast broken a decree made public in many a Feis, by which thou wert forbidden to set foot upon our land, on pain of heavy fine. Thou must here remain until thy chieftain sends thine eric. Meantime, be welcome to our board and dance. It is the feast of Samhuin. This night thou art our guest and not our prisoner."

The first thought of Elim's mind was to reject with scorn and abhorrence the proffered invitation: he felt as if his father's shade were watching his decision. Once more, however, commanding his feelings, in compliance with the necessity of the case, he signified by a low inclination of the head, the acquiescence which he could not speak.

"Thy dog," said the maiden who sat on the other side

* See Note 15.

the fire-place, "was wiser than his master when he refused to pass our valley unrefreshed." So saying, she pointed to the hound, which, unheeded by Elim, had been fawning at his feet during the conversation with the old Druid. Elim patted the animal with a smile, and prepared with hopes, indeed but slightly elevated, to receive with cheerfulness the hospitable attentions of the Druid household. A long table was placed in the middle of the apartment, which was speedily covered with the contents of the seething cauldron, consisting of forest fowls, pork, beef, and mutton of unusual richness. Some dishes of the sham-rock,* or wood sorrel, and cresses were interspersed ; and their drink was mead and oel, with a few horns of wine, imported from the Gaulish coasts by merchants who traded here for skins and other articles of commerce.

When the feast had ended, the Ard-Drai rose, and, in the presence of the hooded circle, extinguished the fire which burned upon the hearth. At the same instant the sounds of harp and bagpipe, heard without, at a distance, seemed to announce the commencement of the festival. The Ard-Drai, followed by all his household, proceeded towards the door, and, in a short time, Elim was left alone with the young female already mentioned, and her hand-maids, a single gallóglach keeping guard outside the door. The thought of disarming the sentinel, of flying across the bridge, and escaping, at any hazard, out of the hands of his present captors, was naturally amongst the first ideas that arose within the mind of Elim : but while he stood indulging it, a voice, at a little distance, said, as if in answer to his thoughts :

"Thou hadst better not attempt it, for though there be but one at the door, there are twenty at the bridge."

"I will take thy counsel," answered Elim, laughing, "though they say a woman's seldom does a soldier service.

* See Note 18.

And who art thou, my kind and fair adviser?" he added, approaching the young woman with an air of respect and courtesy. "A prisoner, doubtless, like myself, but of what name or sept I cannot determine."

Before the person he addressed had time to return an answer, two figures appeared at the threshold. They were those of Duach, Elim's captor, and of a strongly made, well-looking woman.

"Well, Banba," said the maiden, addressing herself to the latter, "is the festival begun?"

"Not yet, Eithne," was the woman's answer.

"Samhuin* has not arisen," added Duach.

"If thou wouldst see a splendid sight," said Eithne, turning to the Ithian, "I can lead thee to a spot from whence thou mayest behold the festival, and thy question shall be answered on the way."

Elim readily assented, and they left the house, preceded by Duach and Banba, passing through an entrance in the rear of the building, and meeting no opposition from a gallóglach who kept guard without. While Elim follows his fair guide, it will be important for us to furnish, in fuller detail than that in which it was communicated to the young Ithian, the story of the maiden, and the manner in which she had obtained permanent footing on the forbidden land.

CHAPTER XV.

CARTHANN, the father of Eithne (as Elim heard her named by Banba), was the brother of the Ard-Drai, who has long since appeared in our narrative, at the wedding feast of Conall. One of their ancestors was amongst the Druid

* See Note 15.

disputants who were appointed to contend against the Christian teachers at Cruachain. He and his companions were unsuccessful. It was alleged by their opponents, in canvassing the morality of the Druid doctrines, that their chief error (so far as the present welfare of society was concerned) lay in the fact that they tended strongly to excite the passions of worldly glory, ambition, and revenge; and the national character was referred to in proof of this unhappy influence. The hooded chief, however, though defeated, was not convinced, and he returned to the Coom, more strongly prejudiced than ever against the new belief. This feeling was inherited by his successors, and existed in all its force within the mind of the Ard-Drai who at present governed the sept. It occasioned those exclusive regulations which still prevented all peaceful intercourse with the surrounding territories, and it led also to an unhappy dissension, which, for a long time, separated the Ard-Drai and his brother. The latter, having embraced the doctrines of the proscribed religion, experienced, in consequence, so much coldness from the Ard-Drai, that he judged it better to take up his residence elsewhere. Travelling towards the royal domain of Meath, he was fortunate enough to obtain a confidential post in the household of Niall, the Ard-righ, who, till within the last few years, had occupied the throne of Inisfail. He first attracted the notice of the monarch during the progress of the Aonach, or sports of Tailtean, in Meath (famous for the victory of the three sons of Miledh,* over the Danaan leaders). These sports, we are told, were instituted by the Ard-righ Lughaidh, the long-handed, in honour of Taité, a Spanish princess, who had instructed him in his youth. They were still held on the same spot, commencing fourteen days before, and continuing fourteen days after, the first of August, during

* See Note 26. The three sons of Miledh, or Milesius.

which time a perfect immunity of person and property was enjoyed by all who attended. They consisted of trials of skill and strength in military exercises, such as the use of the sling, the bow, the javelin, and the battle-axe ; in chariot racing, mock combats on horse and foot, and many other amusements. It was late in the Aonach, when Carthann, accompanied by Duach, then a boy, arrived upon the plain. Before him stood the church of Taité, once a Druid temple, and around were amphitheatres, erected for the accommodation of spectators. The monarch of the isle presided at the games, and distributed the rewards. Carthann, who had received the usual education of a chieftain, took part in the games, and acquitted himself sufficiently well to draw the attention, and finally to win the favour, of the monarch. He was received into the palace of Teamar, where he continued long to hold a post of high trust, and was gradually admitted into the intimate confidence of the Ard-righ. It happened that the Aonach of Tailtean was celebrated for something more than games and exercises. There it was that alliances between noble families were set on foot, arranged, and brought to pass. There it was that Carthann first met the sister of Artri, the monarch of Leath Mogha, whose hand he afterwards obtained, as well by his own merit, as by the influence of the Ard-righ, to whom he was as devotedly attached as man can be to man.

Eithne was the first born, and now the only surviving child of this alliance. From her very infancy she was distinguished by the promise of great beauty of person, and a more than feminine strength of mind and feeling. It was not in the common phrase of social flattery that the friends of her parents predicted for their daughter a shining womanhood. Her dispositions, as they were unfolded, presented a character than which, perhaps, none could be imagined more nearly allied to enthusiasm, yet farther from romance. Serious, no less than graceful, in

her tastes, deep and practical in her affections, warm in her attachments, and rational in all her words and actions, there existed in her whole demeanour a silent, steady ardour, that made her very appearance impressive, and a plenitude of mind that made it seem as if every movement had a meaning. Even in youth the studies to which she most adhered were of a grave and useful, rather than amusing kind ; and they were for the most part suggested by her affections rather than by an ambitious thirst of knowledge, or mere curiosity of mind. Thus the condition and manners of the Druid sept throughout the kingdom, the history of the isle itself, with all its misery, and all its defects, were subjects with which she was familiarly acquainted, and on which she deeply felt. Her father, who delighted in the genius and understanding of his child, was pleased to observe the interest which the monarch took in her improvement, and often indulged in visionary anticipations of the future brilliancy of her career.

At thirteen years of age, Eithne was placed at the celebrated convent of Cill Dara,* for the purpose of completing her education. It was in the close of autumn, when, accompanied by her father, she arrived in that ancient city, made illustrious throughout Europe by the fame of Bridget. Stopping for the night at the house of a Gaillian chief, they rose early on the following morn, and were driven toward the magnificent cathedral. They arrived at the convent just as the portress had opened the outer gate, and were admitted without difficulty, along with many females of the city, who came to assist at the morning service of the sisterhood. At first the array of dismal attire cast a chill into the breast of Eithne, and indisposed her to feel the truth of what she had so often heard, that happiness could dwell in forms so joyless and sepulchral. Even after their admission into the re-

* Kildare.

ception room, where the sisters were conversing with their friends, their cheerfulness had for some time a still more depressing effect on Eithne's mind. How it happened that people shut up for life in these sombre chambers, obliged to observe a rigid rule of conduct ; surrounded by objects that seemed intended only to keep death continually in their view ; suffered only to sing those solemn strains which she had heard from the choir ; and dressed in garments that seemed better suited for the dead than for the living ; could yet preserve the light of an untroubled gaiety in all their manner, was a mystery that Eithne could not solve ; and the sight dejected and perplexed her. By degrees, however, this reserve gave place to increasing familiarity, and she did not feel the same alarm when the young scholars pressed around her with courtesies and questions of child-like simplicity and kindness. One offered her fruits from the convent garden ; another fastened flowers into her girdle ; a third enquired the place of her nativity, and told anecdotes of their convent life, until at length Eithne forgot the cold exterior that had chilled her, and entered freely into their discourse. All seemed interested by her awakened liveliness of mind, no less than by her exceeding beauty of person, and the strangeness of her remarks on what she saw.

Her time was less at her own disposal here than it had been at Teamair. The number of scholars, who were chiefly the daughters of princes and chieftains in the neighbourhood, was considerable. They occupied a portion of the building apart from the sisterhood, of whom two or three only were permitted at a time to mingle with the scholars, for the purposes of giving instruction, preserving order, and enforcing silence, the last, though not in this instance, the least laborious office. They were instructed in such learning as became their sex ; in music, in singing, in the use of the needle ; and there remain some ancient testimonials, to show that even that of the pencil was not un

known amongst them. But, more than all, they were instructed in those duties of piety, of charity, of modesty, and self-command, which give its highest lustre to the feminine character. Here the natural ardour and intensity of Eithne's disposition received an addition of sweetness that completed its attractions, and made the will to please as apparent as the power.

One of the sisterhood, named Munig, became, from a similarity of mind and tastes, the close and intimate friend of Eithne, so far as was consistent with the rules of a community in which particular friendships were discouraged. It happened one night that it was her turn to watch beside the perpetual fire of Saint Bridget.* This emblematical office was a continuation of a very ancient custom. At the time when the country was possessed by the adorers of fire,† a Druid grove and temple were standing at Cill Dara,‡ on the very spot where now the archiepiscopal cathedral stood. The Senæ, or Druid virgins, here watched in turn beside a sacred fire, which was worshipped as a symbol of the sun. On the conversion of the isle, a vestal fire, like this, was still maintained, though with a different meaning, by the hands of Christian votaries, who aimed not so much at a change of forms as principles. Having obtained permission to watch beside her friend, Eithne, late at night, glided from the dormitory, and entered the deserted aisle. She found the former leaning over the orbicular fencework which surrounded the emblematic flame, and lighting it up, whenever it decayed, with an ample fan, which she bore for the purpose in her hand. The light fell around upon the shrines of Conlaedh and of Bridget, rich with the offerings of many a pilgrim, and on the altar, from whose polished panels, it was said, the boughs had sprouted forth to attest the purity of its virgin foundress. Around the aisle were

* See Note 27. Saint Bridget. † See Note 15. ‡ Kildare.

paintings commemorative of the departed saints, the colours of which were scarcely revealed in the dim light that reached them from the distant fire. Eithne had now been many years at Cill Dara, and the day of her departure was drawing nigh. The place, the employment, and her speedy departure, naturally suggested the tone of the conversation, and Munig, at the desire of her young friend, repeated, while she fanned the vestal fire, the following verses of a poem, the production of some nameless bard of a preceding age :

THE ISLE OF THE SAINTS.

I.

Far, far amid those lonely seas,
Where evening leaves her latest smile,
Where solemn ocean's earliest breeze,
Breathes, peaceful, o'er our holy isle.

II.

Remote from that distracted world,
Where sin has rear'd his gloomy throne,
With passion's ensign sweetly furl'd,
We live and breathe for heaven alone !

III.

For heaven we hope, for heaven we pray,
For heaven we look, and long to die,
For heaven—for heaven, by night, by day,
Untiring watch, unceasing sigh !

IV.

Here fann'd by heavenly temper'd winds,
Our island lifts her tranquil breast ;
Oh, come to her, ye wounded minds !
Oh, come and share our holy rest !

V.

For not to hoard the golden spoil,
Of earthly mines we bow the knee—
Our labour is the saintly toil,
Whose hire is in eternity.

VI.

The mountain wild—the islet fair,
The corrig bleak, and lonely vale—
The bawn that feels the summer air,
The peak that splits the wintry gale.

VII.

From northern Uladh's column'd shore,
To distant Cleir's embosom'd nest ;
From high Beinn-Eadair's summit hoar,
To Ara in the lonely west.

VIII.

Through all, the same resounding choir
Harmonious pours its descant strong,
All feel the same adoring fire—
All raise the same celestial song.

IX.

When sinks the sun beyond the west,
Our vesper hymn salutes him there ;
And when he wakes the world from rest,
We meet his morning light with prayer.

X.

The hermit by his holy well,
The monk within his cloister grey,
The virgin in her silent cell,
The pilgrim on his votive way.

XI.

To all the same returning light,
The same returning fervour brings,
And thoughtful in the dawning bright,
The spirit spreads her heaven-ward wings

XII.

From hill to hill, from plain to plain,
Wherever falls his fostering ray ;
Still swells the same aspiring strain,
From angel souls in shapes of clay.

XIII.

The echoes of the tranquil lake,
The clifted ocean's cavern'd maze,
The same untiring music make,
The same eternal sound of praise.

XIV.

Oh, come, and see our Isle of Saints,
Ye weary of the ways of strife ;
Where oft the breath of discord taints
The banquet sweets of joyous life.

XV.

Ye weary of the lingering woes
That crowd on Passion's footsteps, pale,
Oh, come and taste the sweet repose
That breathes in distant Inisfail.

XVI.

Not ours the zeal for pomp—for power—
The boastful threat—the bearing vain—
The mailed host—the haughty tower—
The pomp of war's encumber'd plain.

XVII.

Our strifes are in the holy walk
Of love serene and all sincere ;
Our converse is the soothing talk
Of souls that feel like strangers here.

XVIII.

Our armies are the peaceful bands
Of saints and sages mustering nigh,
Our towers are raised by pious hands
To point the wanderer's thoughts on high.

XIX.

The fleeting joys of selfish earth
We learn to shun with holy scorn ;
They cannot quench the inward dearth
With man's immortal spirit born

XX.

Yet while my heart within me burns,
To hear that still resounding choir;
To days unborn it fondly turns:—
When dies that heaven-descended fire?

XXI.

How long shalt thou be thus divine,
Fair isle of piety and song?
How long shall peace and love be thine,
Oh, land of peace—how long? how long?

XXII.

Hark! echoing from each sainted tomb
Prophetic voices sternly roll—
They wrap my thoughts in sudden gloom,
Their accents freeze my shuddering soul.

XXIII.

Ha! say ye that triumphant hell
Shall riot in these holy grounds?
Shield! shield me from those visions fell,
Oh, silent be those fearful sounds!

XXIV.

They tell of crime, of contest sharp,
Of force and fraud, and hate and wrong—
No more, no more, my venturous harp,
Oh, trembling close thine altered song.

XXV.

Oh, let thy thoughtful numbers cease,
Ere yet the touch of frenzy taints
The land of love and letter'd peace,
The Isle of Sages and of Saints.

Their conversation was interrupted by the expiration of Munig's watch. Soon after, a circumstance occurred which deepened on the mind of Eithne the impression made by reading the sanguinary and mournful annals of

her native isle. A relative of Munig, who was Righ, or King, of Gailian, was slain in battle with a neighbouring chief, and interred near the ancient cemetery of Réilic-na-Riogh, or the Graves of the Kings. It was necessary that the former should be present at the scene of the funeral ceremonies, and Eithne obtained permission to accompany her friend. It was with feelings of veneration, allied to the sublime, that the young princess approached the spot which contained the dust of her country's kings, and on which, in fancy, she had often dwelt. The last portion of the funeral journey was performed by water, and as the day was calm, the river smooth, and the boats numerous, the sight was interesting and impressive. Eithne and Munig sat in a curach not far from that which bore the body of the king. About noon, on a hot summer day, the celebrated resting-place of the kings of Inisfail appeared in sight. The banks of the river were crowded with spectators, and a mournful strain arose as the foremost vessels touched upon the shore. Before them lay a plain, on which stood several buildings, connected with each other by long, low roofed halls.* One of these was pointed out to Eithne as containing the crypt in which the remains of a long train of Druid kings were laid. Another had been since erected for their Christian successors. The other buildings were religious edifices of various kinds. The funeral ceremonies being ended, the friends were received into a female monastery on the spot, which was to afford them shelter and refreshment during their stay.

At midnight, Eithne was awakened from a deep sleep, and a dream of crowns and tombs, by her companion Munig, who bade her rise and follow her with despatch. The daughter of Carthann hastened to comply, and accompanied her friend through a long passage

* See Note 28. Réilic-na-Riogh.

leading to the cloisters, from which again another passage conducted them to the narrow opening of what seemed a subterranean crypt. Here they were received by one of the sisterhood, who admitted them to the recess. Descending, by the light of a lamp which Munig carried in her hand, a flight of granite steps, the latter suddenly turned to her friend, and said, with a smile:

"Thou hast thy wish at length. We are in the sepulchre of kings."

Eithne gazed around her with interest of the intensest kind. The apartment was occupied by monuments ranged on each side, and extending to a length that seemed interminable. Over each tomb appeared the sculptured bust of the perished occupant, and a lamp, suspended from above, gave light to the cold and marble features. The astronomer, who for the first time beholds in his reflector the storied wonders of the heavens made evident to the sight, or the classic enthusiast, who gazes for the first time upon the remnants of the Parthenon, or the Acropolis, may imagine something of the feeling with which Eithne paced from tomb to tomb, and contemplated the chiselled features of the monarchs, whose names and actions had long been made familiar to her mind by the annals of her country. Here lay the mouldering monument of the Grecian Partolan, the earliest colonist of Inisfail. The next was that of his successor Neimhidh, whose architectural taste the Fomharaigh of Tor Conning had so much reason to remember. Here Eithne paused at the monument of Slainge, the first who ever bore the title of Ard-righ, and here she gazed upon the silver hand, which had gained the crown for Nuadh, and which was now suspended at his tomb. She passed successively the sepulchres of Lughaidh, the Long-armed, the celebrated institutor of the sports of Tailtean, and the first who taught the islanders to fight on horseback; of the three

sons of Cearmada, who introduced the idol worship of the sun, the plough share, and a log of wood ; of Irial, the prophet, whose reign was glorious in peace, as well as war ; of Tighernmas, his descendant, who made the famous law of Ilbreachta, distinguishing the classes of the isle by the number of hues in their attire, and whose terrific end still formed the evening legend of the kerne of Breifne ; of Eochaidh Faobharglas, or, of the Green Edge, in whose reign the art of dyeing weapon blades was first discovered, and whose own swords and javelins bore the hue which suggested his surname ; of Fiacha, whose government was distinguished by the bursting up of Lough Erne upon the plains of Magh Geaneim ; of his son, called Mumho, from his powerful strength, and from whom the various kingdoms of Mumhain* derived their common name ; of Eadna, who first caused shields and targets, of pure silver, to be fabricated at Airgeadros, which it was his custom to bestow on the most deserving of his soldiers ; and of Muin-eamhoin, the institutor of the regal order of the golden chain, who, going a step in splendour beyond his predecessor, had armour made and ornamented with pure and ductile gold. A monument of unusual magnificence next met the eyes of Eithne. It was that of Eochaidh the Ollamh Fodhla, who first established the triennial Feis of Teamair, and who still continues to be the Kaliph Haroun Alraschid of the romance of ethnic Inisfail. Next appeared the tombs of Roitheachta, in whose days the carbud, or chariot, both for war and peace, was introduced into the isle ; of Art Imloch, or the Pond-Girt, so named from having taught his subjects the use of the moat and drawbridge, and the construction of the fortification called a Dun ; of Seadna Ionnaridh, or the Stipendiary, famous for being the first who paid his sol-

* Afterwards Thomond, Desmond, Ormond, &c.

diers in money, clothes, and food, and for a written code of military laws and discipline ; of Eadna the Red, who first caused money to be coined at Airgidross ; of Eochaidh Uarcheas (of the Baskets), so named from his invention of wicker canoes, in which he made descents on stormy coasts ; of Macha, the female usurper, who, in spite of the Salique law of Inisfail,* kept forcible possession of her husband's throne, and founded the famous palace of Eamhuin, where now the city of Ardmaca stood ; of Ugainé the Great, who divided the island into its five and twenty portions ; of Roighne, his son, the author of a code of laws ; of Maon,† who taught the people of Gailian to use the *laighin*, or Gaulish spear, from which their territory afterwards derived its name ;‡ of Eochaidh the Sorrowful, who divided the kingdom into its five great provinces ; of his successor of the same name, who was called Airemh (of the Grave), from his regulating the modes of interment, and who reformed the abuses, and reduced the number, of the bards ; of Fearadbach, whose reign was adorned by the counsels of Morann, the Aristides of Irish history ; of Tuathal, the Desired, the institutor of the unhappy Boroimhe Laighean, or Leinster tribute, which, for a long period, made a fatal addition to the causes of disunion, already too numerous, in the constitution of the state ; of Feidhlimidh, the lawgiver, who reformed the genius of the national code, by substituting the *lex talionis* for the law of *eric*, or *amercement* ; of Conn of the hundred fights, in whose days was made the great partition, which divided the isle into the kingdoms of Leath Mogha, and Leath Cuinn ; and of many another sovereign, whose names are not so closely interwoven with the progress of the isle in the arts of war and peace. They came at length to the monument of Lug-

* See Note 29. Salique law. † See Note 30. Maon.

‡ Coige Eaighean, the Province of Spears, now Leinster.

haidh, the last of the ethnic monarchs of the isle, and Eithne found that she had at the same time reached once more the flight of steps by which they had descended. She turned, as she placed her foot on the ascent, to gaze on the double line of sepulchres that extended far behind, and left the place in company with her friend.

CHAPTER XVI.

Soon after her return to Cill Dara, her father came to take her from the convent. She was received at Teamair by her friends with joy, and by the Ard-righ with undiminished kindness. Her extreme beauty, her dignity of mind and person, her liveliness of manner, and her accomplishments, soon rendered her the attraction of the festivals of Teamair, and the theme of discourse amongst surrounding princes. Eithne had many suitors, but none that met her own inclinations, or even her father's wishes. Meantime, she led a cheerful life at the Kempe of Teamair, making all around her happy by her talents, her piety, and a fervent generosity of disposition.

The visions which Carthann often indulged, with respect to her future fortunes, were sorely shaken by an unexpected step of the Ard-righ himself. One day the latter called him into his private chamber for the purpose of dictating an oraïun. Carthann entered, with the keenest interest, for his attention had long been excited by something unusual, yet almost imperceptible, in the conduct of the Ard-righ. Full of learning, full of wisdom, full of kindness for his people, and of care for their welfare, perhaps there seldom was a monarch better calculated to fill a throne with safety and advantage to the state. He was distinguished in assemblies by his elo-

quence; in society by his wit; in war by valour and good tact; and in peace by a wise and moderate government. While Carthann was seated, waiting his commands, the king paced to and fro in a thoughtful manner, as if something pressed upon his mind. At length he said :

"I am not as merry, Carthann, as I used to be."

The confidant admitted that he had long observed a change in his demeanour.

"I have no cause to be otherwise," said the Ard-righ, "if power and wealth, and the ready obedience of a willing people can make a monarch happy. But the truth is, Carthann, my mind has been occupied by a serious question. I am about to resign the throne of Inisfail."

Carthann, in astonishment, let the tablet fall, and gazed upon his master. The monarch smiled, but repeated what he had said; adding that he had resolved on putting his purpose into effect at the approaching Feis of Teamair. His intention was, he said, to retire to the lonely island of Hy, or Iona,* and there conclude his life in the monastic habit. Carthann, kneeling at his feet, with tears besought him to relinquish his intention. He represented to him the danger of exchanging, at so advanced a period in life, the habits of active commerce with men, and the engrossing cares of government, for duties of so secluded and so arduous a character; he reminded him of the austerity of the rule which was observed within the monastery of Columba, so formidable, even to the young and vigorous, not to speak of one whose whole life had been spent in the ease and splendour of a court. Not perceiving that he made any impression on the Ard-righ, he at length conjured him to consider the interests of his people, and not, by withdrawing from them his talents, his influence, and his experience, sacrifice their welfare to the comparatively selfish purpose of

* Y-colum-kill, near Mull.

securing his own religious safety. He urged him, with all the earnestness he could command, to subdue this late desire of solitude, and be true to the ties of affection, of friendship, and of genuine charity.

"Thou wilt see, on reflection," said the monarch, after listening with great attention to Carthann's arguments, "that every reason thou hast urged against my purpose, and many far more powerful, must have long since suggested themselves to my own mind. To those which relate to my own welfare, I have no answer to make, except to thank thee for thy love. As to my people, I have taken care they shall not suffer by my resignation. Donnchadh, the Riogh-danihna,* has almost my years, more than my experience in affairs of state, and his wisdom, learning, and integrity are well known. For the rest, whether here or at Iona, I will never forget my friends."

Seeing the uselessness of debate, the favourite retired to his apartment penetrated with the deepest concern at what he had heard. The Ard-righ persevered in his resolution, and resigned his crown at the next Feis of the nation. Carthann staid to witness the ceremony, which, though not unprecedented, was yet sufficiently unusual to excite considerable interest and surprise. The monarch came to the Feis arrayed in all the regal splendour, and attended by the pomp, of Teamair ; and, in a few days after, departed in a solitary fishing vessel for the lonely isle which was to be the scene of his voluntary banishment. Carthann, resisting the instances of Donnchadh, who urged him to continue at Teamair, took up his residence at the court of Artri, in the city of Luimneach, where he remained until the death of his wife. After this event, nothing could induce him to remain within the kingdom, or to retain the slightest portion of the possessions which

* Heir to the Ard-righ. (See Glossary.)

she had brought him. He arrived one evening, worn with travel and affliction, accompanied by his only child, in the valley of her ancestors, which, till then, Eithne never had beheld. The Ard-Drai's heart was not proof to the sight of his brother returning in sorrow, after years of absence. He received him with forgiving affection, and reinstated him in his small inheritance. Here he lived for two years, overcoming, by his way of life, the bitterness of prejudice which his change of faith had raised against him in his tribe. Dying at length, he commended his orphan child into the hands of the Ard-Drai, entreating for her protection, which was readily granted. The gentleness of Eithne's character soon made her generally loved, while her complying and affectionate disposition endeared her so much to the old Ard-Drai, Curaoi, that many supposed an union between her and his heir, Tuathal, would be the result. The more judicious, however, saw in the character of the latter an effectual bar to this arrangement.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE reader may conjecture how much of the foregoing narrative was communicated by its heroine to Elim, while they followed Duach and his wife through a narrow and stony glen leading to that portion of the Coom nan Druadh which Elim had first seen. The night was bright and starlit, although the shadows of the surrounding mountains prevented their discerning, with any distinctness, what was passing in the vale. Seated on the rocks which lay around, they waited the moment when the gaieties of the annual festival were to commence

* See Note 15.

Elim was delighted with the manner in which Eithne communicated all that she could of the events just related.

"And now, good Ithian," she said, as they were seated, "thou shalt presently witness some specimen of the manners of the valley. There is not now a spark of fire in all the territories of the Hooded People."

Elim looked down and beheld, in the dim light, a multitude of people thronging the shores of the lake, the strip of land already mentioned, and the isle on which the temple stood. The deepest silence prevailed, as if all were hushed in expectation of some portentous event, and although the moon had not yet arisen, the cloudless sky around was all illuminated with her light.

Suddenly a deep murmur, like the beat of waves upon the shore, arose from the assembled people; and Elim, looking toward the summit of the mountains, beheld the golden rim of the full harvest moon appearing slowly in the heavens. The burst of a thousand voices and a thousand instruments ascended from the valley. The multitude, with renewed murmurs of devotion, prostrated themselves upon the earth, while the goddess of the night arose, and looked on her adorers. At the same instant the islet was illumined by a fire which was suddenly kindled near the temple, and around which Elim now could faintly distinguish the gorgeous dresses of the Ard-Drai and his principal assistants. Soon after, burning brands were distributed to the people, with which they were to re-illumine their own hearth-fires, not again to be extinguished before the festival of Bel. The sight of the numerous torches, hurrying along the shore and up the heights, in various directions, appeared to Elim not the least interesting part of the ceremony.

Returning to the Dun, Elim renewed his conversation with the Ard-Drai's niece, while they waited his return. Eithne, who appeared perfectly acquainted with the his

tory and present condition of the sept of O'Haedha, made so many enquiries respecting the young chieftain, and spoke so warmly in his praise, that Elim's countenance was sometimes near betraying him.

"And here, in this lonely retreat, after the splendours of Teamair, thou dwellest content, and quite companionless?" said Elim.

"Not quite," answered Eithne. "Tuathal gives me a great deal of his company, and not a little of his conversation. I am sorry he is not here to lecture thee on caths, and gens, and sciaths, and other warlike affairs. He could prove to thee, beyond question, that our Dun is fortified according to the precise rules laid down by the renowned Art Imloch, or the Pond Girt, that great monarch who first taught the children of Inisfail to raise breast-works of earth and stone, and to construct the moat and drawbridge. Art Imloch and Sedna Ionna-raidh, the first who ever wrote a book on tactics, are the constant subjects of Tuathal's eulogy, as Conn Crethir, and Donn Dairé are the admiration of Duach. He left the Coom at day-break, on an excursion of the chase, and has not since returned. He was expected to take a part at the festival, and, before thy coming, his absence had already begun to make the Ard-Drai anxious."

Elim, on hearing this, was silent for some time, and then said :

"Did thy young friend wear a canabhas with a purple hood?"

Eithne replied in the affirmative, and her answer struck Elim mute for a few seconds. He had no doubt it was the fugitive whom he pursued. The only way he could account for his not having reached the Dun before, was, by supposing (what was in truth the case) that he had concealed himself from the pursuit, in some secret pass, and was fearful of venturing out again until the danger had completely passed away. The necessity of

immediately taking measures for his safety was evident, and he thought it best to throw himself on Eithne's generosity. Relating what had taken place, yet without revealing his rank, he so impressed her with the truth of his statement, and the wantonness of Tuathal's outrage, that she consented to favour his escape, though the event alarmed and distressed her.

The sun was now descending fast, and the sound of the distant citola and piob mala had ceased for some time to remind them of the proceedings at the temple. On a sudden, while both continued silent, the distant concert was renewed with a louder burst of harmony than ever. The music approached nearer, and in a short time the Ard-Drai reappeared, attired in robes of white, and bearing in his hand a blazing brand, which he cast upon the blackened hearth.* The fire was lighted up anew; and now the house was thronged with the inhabitants of the valley, who pressed forward, with a stunning clamour of laughter and of voice, to enter on the amusements of the evening.

In the midst of all this festive tumult, and while the Ard-Drai stood near the fire, commanding peace, and endeavouring to restore order, he was astonished to see Eithne suddenly advance and kneel at his feet. All was hushed in an instant. The old Druid raised his hands in astonishment, those who were approaching the fire stopped short, and those who were at a distance looked back to see the occasion of the sudden silence.

"Well, Eithne," said the Druid, "what wouldst thou have, my child? What must I give thee now?"

Eithne was silent for a moment.

"First grant it, father—and then I will tell thee what it is."

"I freely do," replied the Ard-Drai—"I may grant

* See Note 15.

any thing that Eithne asks. And now, what is it thou hast gained of me?"

Eithne pressed her hands and forehead on his feet, and then said, looking up, with kindling features :

"The freedom of the Ithian prisoner."

"Thou hast thy will," said the Ard-Drai. "It is a little thing to grant thee, what I had almost determined on beforehand. Our kern, Duach," he added, turning to Elim, who stood viewing his intercessor with silent gratitude "has punished thee enough by his needless violence. Thou art free, Christian, to return to thy people: but though we break the chains of force, we would gladly bind thee longer amongst us by those of kindness. Remain to night and share our festival; we will not ask thee to partake in rites which thou abhorrest, but only to join our mirth. Young ears love music, and young limbs the dance, and thou wilt never be the less an Ithian for making merry with the Hooded People."

"I am grateful to thee and to thy kinswoman," said Elim, "but I would gladly reach Rath-Aedain before morn. My kinsmen must suppose me slain,—and I have a mother who will pass a sleepless night if I stay dancing here."

"A daltin can be sent to quiet her mind," said the Ard-Drai.

"I beseech thee press me not," continued Elim, "what thou hast given, give wholly."

"Be it as thou wilt," said the Ard-Drai; "only at least thou must not pass the Druid's threshold without once more sharing his cake and mead."

With renewed anxiety, Elim saw himself compelled to await the termination of the concert and dance which were already in preparation, at the eminent risk of being surprised by the fugitive Tuathal before he should depart.

"Thou canst not help thyself," said Eithne, in a low

tone, as she passed him ; “but I have saved thy head for thee, and thou must now take care of it as thou canst. If Tuathal arrive, avoid him as well as thou art able, until thou canst thread thy way to the other side of the bridge, and then—remember to deal as generously as thy power may enable thee by thy prisoners.”

“I will not forget thy wishes, nor thy kindness,” answered Elim. “If I did, my head were hardly worth thy intercession.”

So saying, and forcibly dismissing his care, he prepared to enter with a cordial spirit into the mirth of the assembly. The apartment was now filled with dresses of a richer sort ; torches, composed of twisted rushes steeped in oil, were lighted along the walls, and a burst of harmony proceeded from the band of crotaries, composed of all but the wind instruments, which were then esteemed too rude for in-door concerts. Elim found the harpers no way inferior in skill to those of his own sept, although their music was of a somewhat obsolete air, and their poetry, for the most part, far more agreeable in style than sentiment.

“But what mode of warfare is this which has been adopted by my conqueror ?” asked Elim, as he led Eithne to her tripod near the fire-place, and sat on the rushes at her feet. “I am sure there is nothing like it in the book of Ionnarraidh. It was more like the spring of a wild cat, than the onset of a well-reared soldier.”

In answer to this remark Eithne informed him that Duach had been from his boyhood the attached and faithful follower of her deceased father, and since his death, a devoted servant to herself. He had been, in childhood, remarkable for a placability of temper, that was even unusual amongst the wild kerne of the hills, until, at the period when he was rising into youth, a travelling Fochlucan,* one of those persons who obtained a livelihood by

* See Note 11.

story-telling, arrived at her father's residence. In the course of the evening, being called on to entertain the company with some of his professional lore, he related, with great emphasis and gesticulation, the famous narrative of the Cath Fionntragha, or battle of Ventry Harbour, fought in the days of yore between Daire Donn Mac Lascein Lomlunig, monarch of the world, and Fionn Mac Cumhaill with his Irish legion. The resounding effect of the heroes' names and the terrible description held out of the havoc committed during a battle which lasted for three hundred and sixty-six days, took hold, like a contagion, of the mind of Duach, and transformed him, from a peaceful and merry daltin, into one of the most redoubted kerne in her father's service. He exchanged his ashen sheep-hook for a skene and javelin, and his saffron tunic, or cota, for the frieze mantle of the warrior. From that time to the present, there was scarce a moment in which he was not heard uttering the names of Goll MacDravin, Rolust Goll, Mongân Muncuscair Mac Domhna, or some other of the thunder-sounding epithets, which were so remarkable in that tale of blood, and which he seemed to feel a satisfaction in mouthing forth with all their depth of sound. This turn of character was fitted, as he entered into manhood (which took place while Eithne was yet a child), with a person almost gigantic, though lean and muscular; and with eyes that seemed to burn in his head, whenever the ruling passion was aroused within him.

"Nevertheless," said Eithne, "since he has become attached to the Ard-Drai, he has involved him in so many difficulties with surrounding princes, by various acts of hostility offered without law, or warrant of his master, that, but for his devoted affection for me, I believe he would esteem himself more a loser than a gainer by his services. You are not the first prisoner with whose presence, in times of the profoundest peace, he has surprised the tranquil inmates of the Dun."

Eithne continued to converse with the young Ithian, pointing out to him the different characters by which the Dun was crowded, relating anecdotes of their daily life, and displaying in the whole a disposition so affectionate, and a mind so gifted, that Elim grieved, whenever she ceased speaking. He felt his spirits sink with a blank and lonesome sensation, when he remembered that as this was the first, it should probably be the last, night of their acquaintance, and that he was now listening, perhaps for the last time, to the voice which had pleaded, unsolicited, for his freedom.

"The different dresses which you see," said Eithne, "distinguish, according to an ancient Druidical* sumptuary law, the different ranks of the wearers. The old man in white who leans on the sally-framed clairsech, is Irial, the principal crotarie, or chief harper, of the entire sept. Next him, almost of equal years, sits Cormac, the chief bard, whose duty it is to follow his master to the field, to sing his deeds at the banquet, and to preserve, in verse, the records of his sept. I confess to you, though I inherit but little of the enthusiasm of my race for their departed privileges, there are times in which his songs have made my veins thrill, until I fancied myself a Druidess; and almost forced me to weep for the lost glories of the sun-adorers, as if the change had been an evil."

"And who are those," asked Elim, "the old man in green, and the younger in saffron, who sit at a little distance from the old filé?"

"The first," answered Eithne, "is Eogen Bel, our story-teller, and the foster-father of Tuathal; having purchased that dignity from his parent, Eire, the Ard-Drai's sister, by a present of fifty choice kine. The younger man is his son Eimher, the best slinger and

* See Note 31. Sumptuary Law.

archer in the Coom, and both remarkable for excessive superstition ; a foible from which indeed Tuathal is not free. He would not eat an odd number of eggs this morning, lest his horse should fail him in the expedition, nor would he suffer his daltin to swallow one for the same prudent reason. As to Eogan Bel, his house, which lies somewhat farther up the Coom, is an absolute den of superstition ; an actually frightful specimen of what the human mind is capable of, when it lets conjecture take the place of truth.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ELIM, who became every instant more enchanted with his new acquaintance, soon after received from the latter an account of the manner in which her ancient sept had become possessed of this lone and singular retreat.

"It is many centuries," said Eithne, "since Cormac, the Ard-righ of Inisfail, pitched his camp at Drum Dumbghaire, against Fiacha, Righ of Deas Mumhain, in order to enforce some tribute, on pretence of injury received from the latter. Cormac, having cut off his enemy's supplies, a great drought ensued, occasioned, as the fo'ers of Fiacha believed, by the spells of Cormac's Druids. Gloom and dismay prevailed through the camp of Fiacha, and the issue would have been fatal to his cause, if accident had not brought to his assistance an unexpected succour. Our ancestor, Mogh Ruith, the most famous drai in the kingdom of Ciar, arrived at his camp, and by means of a white wand, which had the power of indicating hidden springs, supplied the army of Fiacha with abundance of water in their camp. The

troops, relieved of their thirst and of their fears, gave battle to the Ard-righ, and compelled him to retire to Osruidhe, where he was obliged to capitulate, promising to make good to the King of Mumhain the loss sustained by his invasion; giving noble hostages, and renouncing for himself and his successors, all claim of chieftie over any part of Leath Mogha. For this service Mogh Ruith was rewarded with very extensive possessions in Corca Luighe, of which this valley is now the only portion left to his posterity. I confess to thee, Ithian, though I mourn, deeply mourn, the fallen honour of my race, I could well behold them still more straightened in power, provided their depression could contribute in any degree to promote union and good-will amongst the bickering children of our common country. I know, woman though I am, I know how this will end. The hand of the Dal Cais, will be raised against the Eoganacht, Uladh will make war on Midhe, and Claire on Connacht, the spirit of dissension will divide our princes, from the Ard-righ of Erin to the poorest chieftain of a distant township; some foreign foe will take advantage of their discord, and Erin never—never more will know what freedom is.

Elim, who listened with absorbed attention, was surprised, and penetrated by the depth of feeling with which Eithne spoke these last words. He gazed on her with interest of a new and deeper kind, and as he observed with delight and admiration the heightened colour of her cheek, and the moistened brilliancy of her glance, it seemed to him as if, in the instant, her countenance and character had wholly changed into something loftier and nobler, if not more winning than before.

"Thou art an enthusiast, Eithne," said the young chieftain, with a warm smile.

"Say not so," answered Eithne, at once resuming her light and cheerful manner, "I do not sigh for things im-

possible. I have been taught to love peace ; and, as I love my country, I wish she could enjoy it : that is all."

In the mean time the festivities of the evening proceeded with increasing zest. The seanachie told his story ; the minstrel sung his song ; the brehon and the tiarna (or chief of a district) discussed the several laws of south, assault, musterowne, bode, garty, &c. ; the young people chatted and laughed in groups ; the cruitirés played their liveliest airs ; and, altogether, the variety of dresses, the sprightliness of the music, and the cheerful countenances of the assembly, gave it such an exhilarating effect as somewhat relieved the want of refinement in some of its features.

Late in the evening, an open space was cleared in the midst ; the guests half lay, half sat, round the walls on beds of rushes freshly gathered ; while the Ard-Drai, to the great mortification of the Ithian, led his niece away to a kind of canopied recess, completely framed in with flowers and foliage, and placed before the open entrance ; so that those who crowded without to look in upon their ruler, might gratify their hearts without obstruction.

Soon after came the favourite national dance,* the name of which alone is frequent now in the minds of Irish villagers. Elim, who felt pain at being separated from Eithne, took advantage of this circumstance to renew the conversation, and, gracefully presenting a white kerchief, led her to the dance. The harp, the bell, the cymbal, and the drum, once more resounded beneath the practised fingers of the crotaries. At first, to a slow and peaceful movement, three maidens, all in white, advanced abreast, each chained to each by a white kerchief held between. Pair after pair, of youths and maids (amongst whom came first the Ithian and his partner), in similar attire, came after at an equal pace, as many as

* See Note 14.

the building could accommodate. The three in front having advanced to the recess which held the Ard-Drai, did graceful homage to their superior, by laying each her girdle at his feet. Resuming instantly their former attitude, the band on a sudden changed to a rapid measure. The three maidens, standing far apart, held up the kerchiefs so as to form two arches, through which the dancers passed successively, did homage in like manner to the Ard-Drai; wheeled round in rapid semicircles, interspersed with movements of agility and grace, giving place without delay to those who followed, and falling modestly behind into their former places. As the dancers retired, and the music ceased to play, a murmur of approbation arose from the surrounding circle.

Taking his seat once more on the rushes near the feet of Eithne, Elim was about to offer some observation on the entertainment which had just concluded, when he was cut short in his speech by an exquisitely affecting prelude from the clarsech of the principal crotarie of the Ard-Drai. A dead silence sunk upon the circle, and Eithne informed him in a whisper that this was the greatest musician of the tribe, that he had been educated for seven years at a Druidical college near Ross Ailithir, and was esteemed by all a wonder of musical proficiency. He was about to be accompanied by the filea, or poet, in an extemporaneous poem, the two offices being quite distinct amongst the Druids, and the sudden silence proceeded from the high-raised expectations of the assembly, whom either seldom failed to enchant, but whom both together could excite and move almost to any enterprise. The delicious tenderness of the prelude, and the richly modulated accents of the singer, made the tears start into Elim's eyes in spite of him, and it was with a thrill of delight and surprise that he heard his own name mingled in the melody :

I.

Cead milé fàilté! child of the Ithian!

Cead milé fàilté, Elim!

Uisneach, thy temple in ruins is lying,
In Druam nan Druadh the dark blast is sighing,
Lonely we shelter in grief and in danger,
Yet have we welcome and cheer for the stranger.

Cead milé fàilté, child of the Ithian!

Cead milé fàilté, Elim.

II.

Woe for the weapons that guarded our slumbers!
Teamair, they said, was too small for our numbers;
Little is left for our sons to inherit,
Yet what we have, thou art welcome to share it.

Cead milé fàilté, child of the Ithian!

Cead milé fàilté, Elim.

III.

Carman, thy teachers have died broken hearted;
Voice of the trilithon, thou art departed!
All have forsaken our mountains so dreary;
All but the spirit that welcomes the weary.

Cead milé fàilté, child of the Ithian!

Cead milé fàilté, Elim!

IV.

Vainly the Draí, alone in the mountain,
Looks to the torn cloud, or eddying fountain;
The spell of the Christian has vanquished their power
Yet is he welcome to rest in our bower.

Cead milé fàilté, child of the Ithian!

Cead milé fàilté, Elim.

V.

Wake for the Christian your welcoming numbers!
Strew the dry rushes to pillow his slumbers,
Long let him cherish, with deep recollection,
The eve of our feast, and the Druid's affection.

Cead milé fàilté, child of the Ithian!

Cead milé fàilté, Elim.

While a murmur of admiration and delight ran through the circle, Elim advanced, and at the hazard of discovering his rank, removed from his breast the golden clasp which bound his bright green mantle, and divided it between the minstrels.

On returning to his place, he perceived the Ard-Drai pressing Eithne to some measure which she seemed to decline with a bashful mixture of laughter and coyness. The mystery was explained, when one of the maidens already mentioned placed a cruit in the hands of her young mistress. The latter complying at length with the wishes of her aged protector, though with a degree of embarrassment that almost amounted to agitation, ran a rapid prelude in a style that showed Elim she was a perfect mistress of the instrument. Recovering ease and self-possession as she felt the music flow beneath her fingers, she sung in a voice wild, indeed, and unmodulated as the strain of the song-thrush, but sweet and thrillingly distinct in every emphasis, the following verses, in the words of her native tongue. As the song proceeded, all other sounds were hushed to a midnight stillness, and the voice of the singer filled the extensive chamber, till it seemed to be echoed from the roof and sculptured walls :

I.

No, not for the glories of days that are flown,
For the fall of a splendour that was but our own ;
No, not for the dust of our heroes that sleep,
Should the bard of the Coom in his melody weep.

II.

For the thought of that glory remains in each breast,
Though we see them no longer, the dead are at rest ;
And gay is the face of the Druid's lone vale,
But dark is the bosom of wide Inisfail !

III.

The demon of discord has breathed on the land,
 And her sons on her mountains meet hand against hand
 The children who thought for her welfare are slain,
 And her bosom is trampled by those who remain!

IV.

Wild blast of the trompa! that echoing far,
 Hast summoned Leath Mogha with Cuinn to war,
 Far westward of Ara die over the main,
 And never be heard in our valleys again.

V.

Arise on our mountains, O spirit of peace!
 Let the sons of the Riada hear thee and cease;
 Too late for their country, oh, let them not prove,
 That the strength of the island is union and love!

VI.

Oh, spread not thy strife-quelling pinions aloft,
 Till the calm on our country fall sunny and soft;
 From Rechrinn's cold islet and Uladh the green,
 To woody Glengariff and fair Inbhersceine.

The exquisite voice of the fair minstrel, and the intense fulness of feeling with which she poured forth her musical appeal, produced an effect on the assembly which, perhaps, a far more accomplished vocalist might have attempted in vain. The warriors, of whom there were few in the island undeserving of the reproach, looked downward as if in shame; the tioseach lowered his sword, as if to conceal it; the kern drew his cota involuntarily over his skene; and Elim gazed on the beautiful figure of the minstrel, as if she were herself the spirit she had invoked in fancy, a being sent by the genius of her country to exhort her sons to concord and to peace.

The time was now arrived, however, when this evening, so new in the life of Elim, so full of events, and which

he already felt was destined strongly to influence the course of his future fortunes, must draw to a close. He had, indeed, totally forgotten the nature of his situation, and would never have thought of the necessity of departure ; but Eithne, who perceived his abstraction, took an opportunity of directing his attention to the moonlight which glimmered upon the waters of the river, at no great distance from the entrance of the Dun, reminding him at the same time that Tuathal must soon arrive. Elim assented, with reluctance, to her repeated instances, and rose to bid the Ard-Drai and his friends farewell.

“Fill up the parting cup,” said the Ard-Drai, “and hand it to the Ithian. Stranger,” he continued, “it is now a score of years since these old arms took up the gen against thy race, on behalf of him whom I believed their injured chief. Whether his cause were good or ill, it is not now worth while to wake the question. Thy sept have well preserved the peace they gave, and were they all like thee, thus frank, thus cordial and ready-handed, I could rejoice to know them close friends. Here comes the cup—Eithne, do honour to the stranger’s parting draught.”

Eithne, who seemed to think the conference somewhat long, took the golden vessel in silence from the hand of the dark-haired daltin, touched the brim with her lips, and returned it to the attendant, by whom again it was presented to the Ithian chief. Elim paused a moment to remove the green barréad from his bright and curling hair, after which he said :

“I drink to the forgetfulness of useless strife, and to the memory of present kindness. And thou, too, gentle maiden, to whom I owe a freedom that thou hast taught me how to value, I give thee all good wishes in the draught.”

So saying, he drained the vessel of its contents, and was preparing to depart, amid murmurs of kindness and regard from the whole assembly, when with a sudden

bound, Duach sprung into the midst, wheeling his short javelin, and exclaiming aloud :

“Tuathal a-bo!”

“He is somewhat late,” said the Ard-Drai, with displeasure. “It is to be hoped he has brought some precious game that can excuse his absence. If my conjecture prove correct, and that Tuathal in these excursions has other game in view than the wolf and the red deer, it is time for him to look to his inheritance.”

Scarcely was this speech concluded, when a loud cry of women was heard at the bridge without, mingled with the voice of a man in seeming exultation. The Ard-Drai rose hastily, and general confusion appeared in the countenances of the guests.

“It is Tuathal’s voice,” said he ; “his horse’s hoofs sound lonely on the bridge. Some disaster has befallen our friends.”

Eithne darted a warning glance at Elim, who had scarcely retired amongst the crowd, when the fugitive made his appearance at the doorway, his brazen sword still bare, and his dress disordered. As he passed the threshold, he turned back and addressed the crowd of women who followed with increasing lamentations of “Vo! Ohone! O Vo! O Vo! Tuathal!”

“Ohone! O Vo!” he said in a sharp tone. “O Vo and Ohone as much as you will, but do not O Vo at me. It was not I that slew or threw in chains your husbands or your sons. Bright Bel has seen how hard I fought for them. But what could one against a multitude? Dear father,” he continued, pulling off his barréad, and laying his sword for an instant at the feet of the Ard-Drai, “thou art a fortunate Chief Druid to behold me safe. Embrace me, and count thyself happy that it is in thy power to do so. This is it to be somewhat used to combat ; this is it to know how to wield a gen ; this it is to have the use of one’s hands.”

"And feet," said Eithne, at the same time making a significant gesture to Elim to begone; the press at the door, however, rendered it impossible for him to obey.

"Ah, art thou there?" cried Tuathal. "No matter for the feet, it would be well for others if they knew the use of either. There's one fellow I had under my hand for an hour or more. I notched his sciath for him; a clever fellow too, and nimble enough with the weapon: a wicked muscular rogue. Let Bel declare what a subtle under-stroke he used to deal beneath the sciath. I have got three scratches here on the left arm, besides a javelin in my horse's shoulder. I never dealt with such a positive rogue."

"But thou subduedst him?" said Eithne.

"Oh, I—I—why as to that," said Tuathal, "let me do the rogue justice,—I did not behead him; but we—we—both gave over fighting much about the same time."

"And thy friends, Tuathal?" said the Ard-Drai.

"All slain or taken, every one," added the young chieftain.

"By whom?" said the Ard-Drai, waving his hand to still the tumult which this unexpected news occasioned in the assembly.

"Some sept of Ithians, I know not which," replied Tuathal.

"Describe the encounter," said the Ard-Drai; "let us hear something of the manner of the occurrence."

In compliance with this request, Tuathal gave an account of their incursion on a territory near the coast, and in particular of his own single-handed encounter with the young Ithian, whom he described as a person of prodigious strength and wonderful dexterity. In the midst of this detail, and while he was in the act of furnishing a somewhat highly wrought account of his own prowess

THE INVASION.

in the combat, he was suddenly struck mute, by catching the eye of Elim raised to his, and fixed upon him with a meaning which occasioned an immediate recognition.

"What ails thee?" said the Ard-Drai, "why dost thou not continue thy tale? What dost thou gaze at?"

"Thou hast not told me," said a woman who stood near, "how chanced it with my husband."

"Or with my son," said a second, plucking him by the cloak; "is he among the slain or prisoners?"

Disregarding these instances, Tuathal still fixed his fascinated eye on Elim, and stalking across the room, exclaimed aloud, while he shook the sword blade in his face, to the astonishment of the assembly.

"Ho, ho! thou valiant fellow! Is this the end of thy determination? Thou merciless rogue, is it here at length thou hast condescended to pull bridle? What sayest thou now? Where is thy valour now? and thy fierce fairé! thou murderous-minded man! and thy cruel under-cut, thou terrible fellow? Shall I hew thy head off with a blow, thou cruel rogue? Who fears thee now, thou shocking fellow? Wilt thou hunt me now with thy dog, and thy pair of assassins? Wilt thou halloo me like a red deer through my native glen? Wilt thou, O wicked rogue? Shall I cut thy head off with my scian this instant?"

Elim looked modestly downward without making any reply.

"Thou art silent, and thou hadst best," continued Tuathal, "thou art no longer cock on thine own hill; thy bark was loud enough at thine own door, but here 'tis my turn. Thou most unfeeling fellow! How thou didst hack and hew, and lay about thee! Thou cruel persevering fellow!"

"Peace, Tuathal;" said the Ard-Drai, "was this youth amongst the party with whom our kinsmen fought?"

Tuathal answered in the affirmative, and the Ard-Drai commanded Elim to be brought before him.

"I blame thee not," he said, "for fighting well; nor for thy conduct here. But justice must be rendered to my people. I know thy name and rank. It is not every kern rewards a minstrel's song with a golden dealg fallainne.* Thou art Elim, the young chieftain of Rath-Aedain."

"I am," said Elim, assuming with the avowal the dignity of the young chieftain; "thy friend if thou wilt; if not, the chieftain of Rath-Aedain still. I am the son of Conal, and the legal instrument of justice on his slayer; the foe of Baseg, and of all who shelter or abet him."

"Thou mayest be Baseg's foe," replied the Ard-Drai; "thou shalt not long be chieftain of Rath-Aedain. Thou profferest friendship with thy gen scarce dry from the recent slaughter of my children, and thy horse yet warm from the pursuit of him who is to be my successor."

"I acquit him of that," cried Tuathal, hastily; "nay, it was no pursuit. I did but go before, as it were, and he, somehow, came after. It was a kind of an unintentional decoy. I only came for assistance to the Coom, seeing all our friends cut up, and he, poor fellow, I supposed, followed, to—to know where I was going."

"Peace!" said the Ard-Drai; "thou hast thyself to answer for the unprovoked attack that has drawn this woe upon us. But unprovoked or otherwise, the blood of Mog Ruith has been shed, and his great spirit shall not call in vain for vengeance. I revoke the freedom which I gave this stranger in my ignorance. Ithian, thou diest at the rising of to-morrow's sun. Tuathal, hold thy peace, the word is spoken."

A deep silence fell on the assembly; many even of those who had at first exclaimed against Elim, were sur

* See Note 32. Dealg fallainne.

prised at the sudden revocation of the mercy of their chief, and seeming to compassionate the youthful prisoner. The greater number, however, being friends or relatives of the slain, were gratified at the decree. The young chieftain heard it with firmness, but without any ostentation of defiance ; and remained standing erect, endeavouring to collect his thoughts to reply. Before he could speak, however, the Ard-Drai's niece once more arose from her place, and knelt at his feet in tears.

"Away, Eithne!" cried the old man ; "put me not to the pain of denying thee, for I attest the sun, the moon and stars, that what I have said has not been spoken in heat."

"And will my father break his plighted word?" said Eithne, in a pleading tone. "The sun, the moon, the stars, are emblems of fidelity and truth, and shall they be attested to a broken contract? Not by thy love for me, my father, but by our honourable name, by thy untarnished age, and those reverend white locks I love so well, I conjure thee go not back of thy plighted word to-night in the sight of thy children, and of this stranger. He has had thy promise, he has drank our cup, he has tasted our food, let him go as he has come, unharmed, and leave the avenging of our kinsmen's lives in the hands of the Being who loves justice, and will punish wrong."

"I charge thee, urge me not," said the Ard-Drai, "he dies at dawn. The liberty I gave was bestowed in ignorance."

"But it *was* bestowed, my father," pleaded Eithne, looking up in tears, and with the deepest expression of entreaty, in the face of her old protector. "Revoke it not, I implore thee, my dear father! Bring not so dark a blot on thy fair repute, on such a night as this ; a night devoted to the honour of Samhuin berself ;* that moon

* See Note 15.

which thou adorest as a deity, but which I know to be only the fairest of his visible creatures.'

"Rise, maiden!" said the Ard-Drai, in manliest anger; "thou art daring to cross me thus, and far more bold to utter those last words. If I love thee as a child, it is not that I forget thy father and his history. Arise, and leave my presence; thou sayest thou knowest not what?" he added, in a more moderate tone, observing the deep confusion with which his words had covered the kneeling maiden. "Elimbir, remove the prisoner."

The slinger approached, but Elim raised his hand, as if to solicit a pause, while he said:

"From justice I fear nothing for what I have done, in the discharge of my duty as the guardian of my people, and the protector of their holdings. Thy men came unprovoked two several times upon our lands and spoiled our kine, and we in our defence have checked their plunder. From passion this may meet the punishment of crime, from justice never. But one word I will say at parting, though it be my last. It is the curse of our unhappy isle that private passion thus for ever takes the place of public justice. The friends of Inisfail! Shame on the cheat? the friends of their own mean cupidities; the slaves of their own passions, of private revenge, of private hate and private vanity. They turn to the ends of petty interest the power that is given them for the happiness of Erinn. Such are the sons she has nurtured in her bosom, and who call themselves her lovers! If I die, it is not for justice. Thy wildest reasoning could not impute crime to me for the defence of my people, and thou hast thyself pronounced the offering a sacrifice to vengeance. The blood of thy people rests upon themselves; mine rests on thee alone."

"Remove him from the Dun," said the Ard-Drai; "let him be kept in the Carcair na ngiall, and do thou, Tuarthal, keep guard upon the prisoner."

"They told the truth then of the Hooded race!" said Elim, in reply. "In an evening thou hast pledged and broken faith. But there is many a soldier of the Coom in the hands of the O'Headhas, and sorrow will await thy tribe if thou shouldst follow up the crime of Baseg."

The Ard-Drai waved his hand, and two gallóglachs approached in order to remove the prisoner.

"Kind-hearted maiden," he said, looking pale, but smiling as he passed the spot, where Eithne sat, "thou hast pleaded well, but vainly. Farewell, since we shall never dance again."

It was with difficulty Tuathal, assisted by Eimhir, and the two gallóglachs, bore his prisoner safe through the crowd of women and children which beset the Dun. They pressed upon the gallóglachs with shrieks and gestures of the most violent description, tearing their long hair, and beating their breasts with clenched fingers.

"Give place, ye boisterous herd!" cried Tuathal, while the gallóglachs thrust back the foremost with the butts of their battle-axes. "How would ye howl if I had fallen a victim, when ye make such an uproar for the kerne?"

CHAPTER XIX.

LEAVING Elim in the Coom nan Druadh, an unwilling guest, let us now return to the college of Muingharid where Kenric, the Anglo-Saxon, still pursued his studies.

His loneliness, after the departure of his friend, served only to increase his diligence, and he laboured anew at all his studies with such a closeness of application as almost to eclipse the memory of the departed Ithian. Within a year after the latter had left the seminary, Kenric also

departed for Inismore, being accompanied by the same old man, his uncle Vusfræa, who had left him at the college when a child, and who now came to recal him.

On the day he was about to leave Muingharid, the Regent did not content himself, as in the case of Elim, with simply advising him to persevere. Taking him aside he embraced him kindly, blessed him, and then spoke as follows :

“Elim, thy friend, I understand, has done us no less honour in his government, than when he was a pupil in our school. Mayest thou be like him, Kenric ! Thou hast discharged thy part most gratefully to thy instructors. Be careful of the good habits thou hast acquired • be exact in the use of time ; be diligent ; beware of enthusiasm, of inconstancy ; be sparing of thy natural fervency ; give gaiety and cheerfulness to all, but keep thy feeling for thy duty.”

So saying, he embraced the young Northumbrian and bade him farewell. On his return to Northumberland, he found Domnona altered likewise. A lingering sickness had abated somewhat of her animal spirits, and she had grown thoughtful and domesticated. Her evenings were spent by her own hearth, and the golden head-band and glittering necklace had given place to the kerchief which enveloped the head and shoulders in matronly and ample folds. The themes of her eulogy were no longer what they had been, and it was easy for her son to feel that she was changed in mind like himself. The mother and son became now united more fervently than before, while Ailred, nothing altered except in years, continued to serve the duke, to drink his horn of ale, and frown over his game of tœfl.

About this time it was that the famous Charlemagne, desirous of promoting the love of learning in his dominions, obtained through the mediation of Offa, king of Mercia, the assistance of the learned Alcuin, for the

furtherance of his object. It happened that the uncle of Kenric, who had given him his earliest instructions, was not unknown to that distinguished scholar. Finding that his nephew now evinced no disinclination to devote his life to letters, old Vusefræa proposed to Ailred and Domnona, that their son should be sent abroad, for some years, under the protection of Alcuin. He had reason to judge that the latter would acquiesce in such an arrangement when he should be made acquainted with the extent of Kenric's acquirements, and with his ardent love of letters, and his instances were at length successful with his parents. Alcuin, after a few interviews with the young scholar, accorded his assent, and even expressed to Vusefræa a high opinion of his future prospects in literature, an accomplishment then valued in proportion to its rarity on the continent. To which the grey-bearded old disciplinarian replied with a thoughtful head-shake—"that is a matter of little consequence. Kenric's head is high enough already."

The day of departure arrived, and a second time the young Anglo-Saxon left his home. A handsome car, harnessed to a pair of young oxen, and drawn up at the door of Ailred's dwelling, attracted the attention of his fellow townsmen, and a loitering crowd collected to witness the departure of the young student, whose piety and learning had already made him known throughout his native valley. He parted now from his parents with greater regret on both sides, than when he had embarked for Inisfail under the guardianship of Vusefræa. Even Ailred, to whom he had insensibly endeared himself by his quiet assiduity and tranquil virtue, grieved at bidding him farewell, though he had hardly ever spoken kindly to him since his return from Muingharid. Domnona also wept while she counselled him.

But his severe old uncle Vusefræa surprised him more than all at his departure. Kenric went to bid him fare-

well at his own school-room, from which he would not absent himself a day even for an occasion like the present. Kenric was in high spirits, indulging even to exaltation the sanguine delight he felt in the contemplation of the novel field on which he was about to enter. Vusfræa, whom he found towering like an old oak above a crowd of little noisy Northumbrian disciples, to whom he was about to give their daily lecture, did not seem at once disposed to enter into this gaiety of temper. He took his nephew apart from his pupils, and after reproving him with even more sharpness than usual, for some defects in his attire which he condemned as vain and frivolous, spoke as follows :

“ Wherever in the dominions of Charlemagne, Alcuin and you may take up your residence, you will find virtue cultivated in various walks. The class with whom you are about to have the nearest connexion, are those who cultivate human knowledge for the advantage of their race. Strive to excel the most strenuous in this—but have a care of pride.”

So saying he suddenly threw his arms about his nephew's neck, and then, as if ashamed of the unusual weakness, returned to his pupils. Kenric left the house with spirits somewhat abated. The strokes of the rod resounding by way of announcement against the wooden walls of the lecture-room, as the old man returned to his place, followed him down the street, and the harsh and rigorous tones of “ Lilla, Oswy, silence! To your place, Coifi! silence!” showed that the fit of tenderness, so rarely indulged, had passed entirely away.

CHAPTER XX.

IN those days, when the opportunities of distant communication were much rarer than in ours, the care of a parent for an absent child may be well supposed more weighty than at present. The first accounts which reached Domnona of her son delighted her with the assurance of his continued gentleness, his modest and cheerful assiduity, in all his exercises. More than a year elapsed before she heard again, and then he had already begun to justify the prognostic of Alcuin, and even, it was said, attracted the notice of Charlemagne himself.

In the midst of these new honours, almost too weighty for so young a head, Kenric having completed the time which he originally proposed spending on the continent, turned his attention homeward. Leaving Alcuin in Tours, he returned to his father's house, where he was received by Ailred with gladness, and by Domnona with a mother's welcome. The latter, however, found him altered for the worse in his appearance. He had left her a healthful and serene-eyed boy, in a plain red tunic, and with a handsec thrust in his girdle, and he now crossed her threshold with a thin and worn countenance, and a slighter frame, on which was hung one of those uncomfortable graceful saga, of which Charlemagne complained so feelingly. A dagger, highly ornamented, had usurped the place of the handsec in his girdle, and there was moreover in the half-shut eyes and languidly curling lip of the travelled and applauded Kenric, an unpleasant expression for which Domnona could not account.

A week passed away in joy, and Kenric seemed to his mother the same as ever in affection and in duty. One thing only perplexed her, and that was that he manifested no desire to see his old uncle Vuscfæa, although the lat-

ter was now lying sick in the town, and visited by herself, to Kenric's knowledge, regularly twice a day. The old man seemed pained at length at this neglect, little as he had been in the habit of giving expression to his feelings, and on his recovery bade Domnona say to her son that he longed to see and speak with him. The brow of Kenric fell at the proposal, but he complied without farther delay. His mother observed at his departure that he had changed his fine French sagum for a homelier surcoat of Saxon manufacture ; but, on her inquiring the reason of it, he made some hasty answer, and departed half blushing and half frowning.

He raised the wicket-latch, and beheld Vusfræa seated at his afternoon meal. Before him stood an oval table covered with a cloth, a convenience not unknown to the Anglo-Saxons, on which were placed a cup of milk with an empty plate and handsec, on which the white-headed old man was in the act of placing a small pittance of roast meat, presented to him on a little spit by his youthful attendant Webba. A lofty four-legged trivet, placed over the blazing fagots, contained some boiling vegetables, and a small cake of wheaten flour rested on the table against an empty bowl.

A slight colour passed over the wrinkled cheeks of the aged teacher as he recognized his nephew. He rose to embrace him, which he did in silence, but affectionately, and said as he resumed his seat :

"Thou art welcome, Kenric, though thou hast waited for my bidding."

Kenric having no true excuse to offer, was forced to remain silent ; and his uncle proceeded with his meal. After he had left him standing in the same place long enough to make him feel awkward and embarrassed, he said in a calm voice :

"Thou art grown a great man, they tell me, Kenric, since we parted. Is it true, my boy ? They tell me thou

hast written books, child, hast thou?" Kenric, long unaccustomed to so familiar a mode of address, returned an assent as careless as he dared, and the mutual silence was resumed.

"And how were thy treatises entitled, Kenric?" was the next sentence that came from the old schoolmaster.

Kenric, who did not think there was a person of education in Europe unacquainted with the names or subjects of his books, replied in a still more careless tone :

"One called the *Currus Triumphalis Virgilii*, and another *De natura Mundi, et Astrorum*."

"*Et Astrorum*!" echoed Vuscfæa, looking at him in astonishment ; "that was a flight indeed. Thou art welcome, Kenric, from the stars. Thou hadst need of a *currus triumphalis* indeed for such a race ; *De natura mundi et astrorum* ! And what hadst thou to say about the stars, Kenric?"

"Only what the great Virgin* said before me, uncle," answered Kenric ; "the theory was his, not mine."

"The great Virgin," said the old man musing ; "I understand. Some new-fangled notion, of little consequence to an old man like me. Thou needst not seek to make me comprehend it," he added, perceiving his nephew about to speak. "I shall learn its truth or falsehood before long in the natural course of things, without wasting time about it here. So thy good friend Virgil, and thyself, may keep your knowledge of the stars for those who have some use of it. *De natura astrorum* !" he added, in a low voice, resuming his meal, "high enough, in truth."

"I will send you to-morrow, uncle, by Webba," answered Kenric, in a conciliating tone, "two handsomely illuminated copies I have caused to be made of both books by the most famous scribes in Tours, and perhaps when you look into them they may interest you more."

* The Bishop of Saltsburg.

Th^e old schoolmaster was silent for a time, and looked a little softened. "Send me those copies, Kenric," he added in an altered tone; "there may be more in this theory than the name would promise, after all. But to imagine a young man supposing himself qualified, by a journey through Gaul and Bavaria, to write a book on the nature of the stars, appears somewhat strange."

He now bid Webba place a stool for his nephew, and observed, as he took his seat, in a tone of still increasing satisfaction :

"I am glad to see that the fashions of Gaul have not made thee ashamed of our Saxon apparel, Kenric; though, indeed, it suits not well with the costliness of thy undergarments. What ornament is that thou wearest in thy girdle?"

"This uncle?" asked Kenric, laying his hand upon his dagger.

"Ay, that toy at thy side, what is it?"

"A—a kind of—handsec, uncle," answered Kenric, with hesitation.

"A handsec? Let me see it," said the old man. "This a handsec!" he cried, comparing it with the Saxon knife upon his plate. "Double edged, and pointed as a needle?" he added, after he had drawn it from the scabbard, and contemplated the glittering little blade with a curious eye. "This is but an ungainly knife for the table, Kenric."

"It is not intended for that use, Vuscfraea," said his nephew.

"For what then?" asked the old man.

"For—for—why, it is a common article of wear in Tours," answered Kenric, blushing.

"For bloodshed, is it not?" asked his uncle. "And is it to hide this Gaulish weapon, Kenric, that you keep the Saxon cloak? Is this the handsec they taught you to use in Tours? Is this your study too besides the na-

ture of the stars? Kenric," he added, "bid me break this weapon!" And he placed his clouted shoe upon the naked blade.

"Not for the world!" cried Kenric, starting from his seat. "It was the gift of Charlemagne himself."

"So much the worse," said Vuscfraea; "so much the worse, my son. It is a bad sign when a Christian turns the weapons of blood into toys of vanity and pride. Let Charlemagne keep his gifts for his warriors, my boy, but your vocation is a peaceful one. I do not like to see it, I tell thee. I do not like it, Kenric. Bid me break the weapon. It is no scholar's toy."

"Indeed, I cannot, uncle," answered Kenric. "It is a gift I prize too highly. I never intend to use it in any way whatever, but indeed I will not wrong the Emperor's bounty. Give me the dagger, uncle."

Vuscfraea paused for a little time, and then, sheathing the weapon, handed it to him, saying, in an altered tone: "Well! take it, but beware of it."

Soon after the young Northumbrian returned to his father's dwelling, somewhat depressed in spirits, and wondering what it was in his own character of which his uncle appeared so distrustful.

CHAPTER XXI.

DOMNONA perceived, but could not understand, the self-conceited turn of mind which had already influenced the manner and conversation of her son, and the bent of his thoughts upon many subjects, in themselves, perhaps, of little importance. It would seem as if he had not himself escaped the taint of the spirit of subtlety against which he contended in his writings, and which had already begun

to disgrace the learning of the continental schools ; or rather as if he could not touch it even in hostility without soiling the dove-like innocence of his own character. Still farther spoiled by the adulation which followed his success, he had insensibly acquired a tinge of egotism in all he said and did. He had indeed been altered during his absence, and not in frame alone. Once he was ignorant of vanity, now he talked a great deal against it. Once he was humble, now he praised humility. Once he was known to practise virtue ; now he was heard extolling and applauding it. Once he avoided vice ; now he declaimed against it. All this, it is true, was well, and sounded well in the ears of Domnona, but yet, without knowing why, she could not help sometimes sighing at the recollection of the silent, fervent boy who had returned to her from Inisfail, and whose virtues were unknown outside their own small neighbourhood.

She was too simple, however, in her own mind, to venture any condemnation of a change, the cause of which she was not even able to understand. It is true Kenric did not find his father so complying ; but then Ailred, though he sought to check this spirit, did so not in the manner most likely to do good to his son. It may be well supposed, from the little already mentioned of his character, that he was not a man likely to apply the best remedy to the disease by which the latter was affected, or patiently to endure its consequences. The sickly Domnona saw with increasing pain, that this was likely to lead to important disagreements between Kenric and his father. The latter complained to her that what he chiefly disliked was, not the frequent occasion his son took of expressing a different opinion from his own, but the manner in which he did so. It was not that he ever dared to use any openly disrespectful language, or proceeded to actual altercation with his parent, but there was a degree of contempt in his look and words which seemed as strange

as it was detestable. Could it be that Kenric, the flattered and successful, had begun to despise in his aged father the want of those endowments by which he was himself distinguished, and that the holy law of nature, and the still holier law of nature's origin, were lost and forgotten in the pride of intellect? Was Ailred now, in the eyes of the successful Kenric, only one of those dim-eyed guardians of genius (who are mentioned, with so much contempt in modern biographies, as only occupied in thwarting the lofty destinies of their charge), and was Kenric himself in his own eyes the unappreciated child of thought? These were questions which the latter never dreamed of asking his own heart, and which no mortal tongue beside could answer; but yet his conduct augured little better. Whenever, on whatever question, a difference of opinion arose between Ailred and his son, the manner of Kenric would lead a stranger to think that he was the superior, or that he was at least some great philosopher listening with tolerance and assumed good humour to the fancies of his amanuensis. If he delivered an opinion, it was in a careless tone, as a matter of course, and with the air of one who hardly expected to be understood. If he condescended to argue a point, it was in short muttered sentences, and with an appearance of indifference, as if there were no necessity for, nor any use in his putting forward the strength of his mind; and even those were sometimes uttered as if in soliloquy with himself, rather than directly addressing his parent. If the latter grew warm (which was an usual effect of their conversation), the countenance of Kenric exhibited a dutious effort to repress a smile; according as the old man's choler rose, the son's ostentatious serenity increased, and when at length they separated, the latter would stroke his young beard, as if he had only just undergone what was natural and unavoidable, observing, perhaps, to the afflicted Domnona, that this could not be helped, for his father

did not understand him. By which fine phrase he was modest enough to mean that his parent did not, or could not, comprehend the nature of his character. Every succeeding collision of this kind only produced a recoil that left the father and son at a greater distance than before ; and shocking as the prospect seemed, it was impossible that discussions, which never terminated amicably, could avoid producing some decisive rupture at the end. This it was that the weak-minded though affectionate Domnona foresaw and dreaded.

This occasion for which Kenric's conduct afforded such reasonable grounds of apprehension arrived at last. We have already mentioned the Anglo-Saxon chief or noble, whose castle stood in the valley, and on whom Ailred was dependent. This lord was a man of some peculiarities of character, having a great desire to pass for knowing more of books, particularly in matters of morality and science, than was in any way general amongst the laity of his time. In all these matters, Ailred, who was himself profoundly ignorant, made it a point to yield up his opinion to that of his patron, and found his interest in his compliance. But Kenric, who soon perceived and despised this spirit, with a scorn that was even more manifest than when he hated meanness more sincerely, without considering either the feelings or the real advantage of his erring parent, sought every means of mortifying him by a display of independence of mind that often looked more like arrogance.

This nobleman, having heard of Kenric's fame, and being touched with a desire of doing something for the advantage of the son of Ailred, made a proposal, which the latter accepted with rapturous gratitude. This was no less than an offer of his personal introduction of Kenric to the court of Offa, his own relative, and king of Mercia, then the most celebrated monarch of the Heptarchy, and a great encourager of learning.

But in order, as he said, to ascertain the soundness of the young scholar's qualifications, for his own satisfaction, before he would venture to take upon him the dignity of patron, the Saxon duke invited the father and son to spend an evening together at his castle.

Kenric was not pleased at the idea of being schooled and questioned by an uninformed Anglo-Saxon duke, from whom he could receive no higher honour than that of finding him, perhaps, after a pompous examination, condescend to agree with Charlemagne and other great men. He was ashamed, however, to let his mother see his vanity, and he agreed to accompany his father to the castle.

He dressed himself for the occasion, so plainly, that even old Vuscfraëa could not have discovered a single gleam of gaudiness in all his apparel. His tunic was of the coarsest blue, and the Saxon handsec had once more taken place of the gift of Charlemagne. Domnona told him she thought their host would be offended if he should take notice of this little discourtesy. But this only made Kenric imagine that there would be more spirit and independence in adhering to his own notion. This he proved to her by many eloquent arguments, which Domnona was unable to answer, though she seemed unsatisfied at the end, for she said as they parted :

"Let Vuscfraëa say what he will, I had rather see thee now, my child, in all thy Gaulish gaudiness than that plain Saxon dress."

Before Kenric could make any reply, old Ailred came from their dwelling, and summoned him to depart.

"Kenric," said his father, whose less active eye did not detect the faulty attire, which made Domnona anxious or perhaps whose more thorough knowledge of the duke prevented his participating in her uneasiness : "I have a caution to give thee, lest thou stumble on the threshold of thy fortune. The duke will have his way, mark that. Be guided by me, therefore, for I know him better than

thou, and know better what will please him. Observe me when the attendant has filled the wine-cups. Whenever thou strikest the chord amiss in the discourse, I will touch the brim with the point of my handsec, just to make it ring; when thou art about to do mischief, it shall be stricken twice; but when I would have thee altogether hold thy peace, I will strike a third time, and beware how thou proceedest after."

To this Kenric offered no reply, and they proceeded in silence to the castle. They found the duke attended only by a few necessary domestics, for he wished that their conversation should be private. To Kenric's great astonishment, he soon beheld in the nobleman a good-natured simple man; and almost the first sentence he spoke on seeing the son of Ailred, showed how little occasion there was either for the vaunted spirit of the latter, or for Domnona's fear.

"What, Ailred!" said he, "this thy boy? this the disciple of Alcuin! I feel a pleasure in the very sight of him. I am glad, young man," said he, surveying Kenric's dress with a delighted eye, "to see that thou keep'st an humble spirit in thy good fortune, and that fame, which crazes older brains, has planted no folly in thine. I am glad to see that thy long residence amid the fopperies of Paris and of Tours, has not tempted thee to fling aside the homely Saxon garb."

Kenric, who had prepared himself for haughtiness, and even for coldness, was not on his guard against undeserved eulogy, and he blushed deeply with a conscious shame, longing now as much for his French attire, as he had for the Saxon, when he visited his uncle.

"Have done blushing, Kenric," said the duke, good humouredly, observing his confusion; "thy ears ought to be better accustomed to the sound of praise at this time, than to bring the blood into thy cheeks at the commendation of a poor Northumbrian duke, whose only boast is

that he can read what thou writest. I am glad to see thee in my hall, heartily glad."

Pleased, but humbled, Kenric took his seat near the hearth at the duke's desire. After dinner, which consisted of little more than boar's head and apples, while an attendant, kneeling on one knee, presented a wine cup of the darkest jet to each of the company, the noble host commenced a more intimate conversation with the young scholar. Allured by the affability of the chieftain's manner, and pleased with the deference which he appeared to have for his opinions and sentiments, Kenric was gradually led into a free and cheerful communication of what he had seen and thought during his life in Gaul and in Bavaria. He described the schools, the cities, the churches, the monasteries, and something of the courts of the continent. He spoke with simplicity, and the duke listened with pleasure, while Ailred sat silently diminishing the contents of his polished wine-cup, the brim of which he did not once see occasion to touch during the whole discourse.

CHAPTER XXII.

BUT so flattering a calm only aggravated the horror of the storm which succeeded. Kenric was speaking of a reverend person who had distinguished himself in Luxieu by his hospitality, his munificence, and his capacity for letters.

"By those who knew better than any layman could," said Kenric, "it was reputed of him that he could only be charged with one public error in all his life, and that was his too great obstinacy in holding out about the time of celebrating Easter."

Here he started, for he suddenly heard his father's wine-cup ring. Duke Elfwin, however, not seeming to take any notice of what had been said, Kenric proceeded in his account of the individual of whom he had been speaking, and at the conclusion was asked by the duke what he thought himself of the question to which he had been alluding.

Kenric, a little surprised at the query, excused himself from pronouncing any opinion, saying that he had never considered himself qualified to enter on questions of that kind.

"Thy modesty is apparent," said the duke, "but thou art a scholar, Kenric, and this is, in a great measure, a question relating to the mere computation of time."

"True," replied Kenric, "but it also comprehends a point of ecclesiastical discipline, in which a layman must be only an intermeddling judge."

The cup rung twice in the hands of Ailred.

"Well, well," said Elfwin, a little disconcerted, "as a scholar and a man of science, thou hast, at least, an opinion on one side or the other."

"My stock of science," said Kenric, and he paused a moment, for this brought Elim and Muingharid to his recollection; "my stock of science is very small indeed; but the little knowledge I have would incline me to the opinion of the individual of whom we have just been speaking."

Here Ailred, with a significance that he intended should not be mistaken, struck the wine-cup three times, and enforced the action by a stern look at his son.

"Thou art aware," said Duke Elfwin, in a tone of greater depth and seriousness than he had hitherto used, and after he had deliberated long in silence, "that this question was decided before thy father saw the light in our own kingdom of Northumbria. Let us hear what grounds thou hast for retaining an opinion which has

been so long since given up by its most obstinate adherents."

"Mistake me not, I entreat you," answered Kenric; "you only asked my opinion as to the question of chronology, in which I am rather inclined to agree with the worsted side at the discussion to which you have referred."

"And wherefore?" asked the duke.

"Simply," answered Kenric, "because, from the little I know about such sciences, I should be inclined to prefer the calculations of Anatolius to those of Victorius."

"Tush," said Duke Elfwin, hastily, "that old argument has been urged both in Burgundy and here, until we are weary of hearing it."

"I make no show of novelty in it," answered Kenric, looking a little annoyed, "but if it be sound and just, it may be well excused for being reverend."

"And so upon this reverend argument, which was reverend enough, in thy grandsire's days, to die a natural death before he did, thou still clingest to an opinion which has been ceded long since, all over the continent, in Hy, in Uladh, and the whole of Inisfail; in short, every where."

"Is not this hard?" said Kenric, kindling a little, and no longer heeding the warnings of Ailred's wine-cup, which, drained of its contents, now rung a perpetual peal. "I told thee at the first that my opinion merely regarded the chronological question."

"Thou didst say so," answered Duke Elfwin, with more distance of manner than before, "but the one opinion seems only a foundation for the other. If Anatolius were right in his calculations, then surely the upholders of the new ordinance, as it was called, were in the wrong."

"True, Elfwin," said Kenric, "they were in the wrong as to the computation and adjustment of time, but right

nevertheless in their decision ; for I hold it a matter of little consequence whether Easter be celebrated on the fourteenth day of the moon of the first month, or on the seventh day following, in comparison with the advantage of having all the Christian world united to celebrate it at the same time."

"So thou *hast* an opinion after all, I find," said Duke Elfwin, "and on the ecclesiastical question too. I thought what thy modesty would come to."

"An opinion indeed," said Kenric, "but it is on the side of submission."

"And that is a new side for thee to be found on," cried Ailred, breaking in upon the discourse with sudden warmth, and casting an angry look at his son.

"Nay," said Duke Elfwin, smiling, "thou need'st not be angry at his apostacy awhile, for wherever he has learnt it, thy son has the knack of taking over his own opinion to the submissive side along with him."

Kenric, roused by this double assault, now entered with greater zeal into the defence of his own views, and the discussion became close and ardent to a degree that suited neither the difference in years nor rank. The duke dwelt with weight on the moral expediency of the decision which had eventually been adopted, cited many pressing authorities, and urged many excellent reasons in its favour, all of which Kenric admitted without debate, clinging only to the single position that he himself was in the right about the chronological part of the question, and proving it by many elaborate arguments drawn from the adjustment of lunations, the time of the equinoxes, and other grounds of that nature. Unable to obtain, from his young opponent, even the show of deference and reserve which common propriety would have recommended upon a point on which there was no pressing necessity for making a convert, Elfwin carried the war of words into a more extensive field of church history and discipline,

with which he believed no layman could be more familiar than himself. But here again he found himself in error, for Kenric, though he entirely agreed with the duke on all important points, yet clung with a contumacious tenacity to trifles, which Elfwin thought decorum might have induced him to suppress, at least, if not to surrender. But Kenric, accustomed to the society of scholastic disputants, and wholly ignorant of that kind of generosity which imposes a restraint upon self-will, forgot all courtesy in pursuing his own notions. Ailred, guided much more by the manner of the discourse, than by its meaning, of which indeed he had long since lost all scent, wondered how argument could run so high between two persons so well agreed as he heard Kenric, at every instant, declare they were. He became, however, himself at length of this opinion, when he observed the duke (whom he never in his life knew to yield to any man in argument) grow silent, and resume his good humour ; for Elfwin had in fact begun to discover something ridiculous in his own conduct.

But this flattering illusion was removed before they separated for the night. Taking Ailred apart, after giving him some commissions to execute on the following day, he commended the learning and ability of Kenric, which he said were fully equal to what he had expected ; and concluded by saying :

“Thou wilt not fail thyself to be present at the castle before sunset ; but thy son need not accompany thee any more, for he is a great deal too clever for any office that I could procure him.”

Stunned, as if by a thunder-clap, Ailred saw the duke retire, without the power of replying either by speech or gesture. Kenric having now made ready, they took their departure together, the father observing a strict silence on their way home, while the son indulged the most self-complacent fancies, supposing that he had ele-

vated himself considerably in the estimation of his Saxon patron, and sustained his continental reputation with success. On their reaching home, Ailred, feeling no inclination for his nightly ale and tœfl, spent the evening by his own fireside, listening in silence to the foolish flights of Kenric, who little imagined what a morning was before him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE Anglo-Saxon household met as usual at their early meal on the following day. The same portentous silence was observed by the master of the family; while Kenric still continued to converse with confidence and freedom, and was only deterred by a glance from Domnona, who saw by Ailred's countenance that he was not pleased, from alluding to the occurrence of the preceding evening. Kenric, imagining that he had now demonstrated to his father that great superiority which he was often anxious to display before him, supposed that the silence of Ailred proceeded from tardy conviction, and left the room, to meditate on the course which he should next take. Now in his mood of delight he felt his filial affection awakened, and reproached himself for his many disrespectful alterations with his father. He determined, before he should leave his home for the court of Mercia, to ask the forgiveness of Ailred for his past disobedience and neglect, and not to desist until he had obtained it. The more he meditated, the stronger his remorse became, and the many slights by which he had been accustomed to irritate and annoy his parent, now that they were going to part, came back upon his mind with all their unnatural culpability unveiled.

While he leaned with one shoulder against the outer

wall of the building, thinking on those things, with eyes fixed upon the ground, in grief and shame, his father gave Domnona an account of what had taken place on the preceding evening. He spoke with much gesticulation, pacing up and down before the chair on which Domnona sat, now stopping short to address her more directly, now bracing the girdle of his tunic more tightly, or flinging back the long white hairs which anger brought upon his forehead. His wife, meantime, sat following him with wondering and grieved eyes, while with one hand she stroked the back of a glossy black cat, which, with the instinct that attaches this animal to invalids in a family, was pacing back and forward from her lap to the table which stood near, purring aloud, and evincing little sympathy with the scene of human agitation which had commenced before it. Ailred concluded his narrative by informing his wife of the parting speech of Elfwin.

"Not go with thee again!" cried Domnona, turning in sudden alarm upon her seat: "what, Ailred! would the duke forswear his word?"

"He never pledged it," answered Ailred, "and if he had, I would not have censured him. Thy darling, Domnona, thy keen-witted darling, has the knack of making even falsehood look excusable. Kenric has too much wit for making, or at all events for keeping, friends. To dare the duke at his own table, about a question of stars and moonshine, and stumble over a straw, on the very threshold of his favor! Evil is the star of such a moon-struck madman; evil is the knowledge that fools his understanding, and the books that have taught him pride and disobedience. This is thy hope, thy joy, Domnona. This is he whom thou and old Vusfræa (another crazy visionary) wouldst have me send to the schools of Inis-fail, to fill his head with the offscourings of other men's brains, and pride himself upon such trash, more than an honest man upon his own plain thoughts. A parcel of

cozening rubbish of parchment and daubing and scratching, fit only to blear the eyes and addle the heads of simple citizens, and come between them and their livelihood at the end. I wonder much why the monks will encourage such doings, to withdraw men out of their vocation, and give them a longing after matters that were better let alone."

"Thy brother," said Domnona, "often repeats that the mischief in such cases is not in the learning, but in the learners."

"He may say what he will, and thou mayest second him as thou didst before," replied her husband; "but this I will uphold, that had I made him, as I then designed, a page in the household of Elfwin, he would be now a happier and perhaps a wiser man, notwithstanding all his gift of words and his knowledge of the stars. But let the stars take care of him, for I will do no more. He mars his own fortune, and he will not let others make it. Let us see, then, what his wit will do for him."

Domnona now interposed in a pacificatory manner between her husband and his anger. She represented to him that he attached, perhaps, too much importance to a hasty expression of the duke, and recommended that Kenric should be induced to do something by way of amends, which she thought would be likely to reconcile Elfwin to his abandoned project. The idea seemed to diminish the resentment of Ailred, and he consented to discuss the subject with his son.

Soon after, Kenric entered the apartment with an altered and a serious air, prepared for satisfaction. Ailred turned silently to the fire as he made his appearance, while Domnona, after a little pause, said, with suppressed uneasiness:

"Kenric, thy father says thou hast given him reason of offence."

Kenric looked towards his father as if to know his

fault. Somewhat appeased with his submissive air, the latter said :

"Wilt thou tell wherefore thou didst not regard the warning I gave thee last night on our way to the castle? Dost thou remember the solemnity of my injunction? I told thee to beware how thou shouldst disregard it, and wherefore was I not obeyed?"

Kenric appeared surprised to find that this was one of the grounds of offence of which his father complained, but he said nothing in reply.

"Answer me," said Ailred, with increasing earnestness, "didst thou not think of that? Didst thou forget my presence? Didst thou not hear the wine-cup ring, ring, ring, till I had hacked the brim with my handsec into the likeness of a victualler's chopping block? And, if thou hadst forgotten that thou wert my son as thou often didst before, I could have forgiven it; but, thou unnatural! didst thou not remember that thou sat'st in the presence of the duke?"

Kenric bent his head to conceal a smile, which, even in this serious moment, he could not suppress.

"Dost thou smile at that!" cried Ailred, "dost thou slight our patron!"

"Surely, father," answered Kenric, "thou wouldst not have had me go against my conscience to give up my opinion!"

"What was it!" cried Ailred. "A trash of lunations and star-gazing! Thy conscience, truly! Thou hast a conscience nice enough for thine own pride, but very easy for thy duties as a son and subject. Ah, one ounce of wholesome brain in thy own head, would have been worth more to thee than all that ever oozed out on sheepskin from the addle pates of thy instructors. Thy opinion, sayest thou! Will thy opinion put a cloak upon thy back, or a house over thy head (though it be hardly worth the covering)? Will thy opinion feed thee? Will

it be a duke to thee, now that thou hast lost Elfwin forever?"

"Lost, father!" exclaimed Kenric, in astonishment.

"Thou luckless boy," replied the latter, "the duke renounces thee! I am no more to bring thee to the castle to gainsay him at his own fireside."

So saying, he turned away, while Kenric remained silent for a time, struggling within himself at what he had just heard. At length, with a manner deeply affected, he said to Ailred:

"Father, if I offended you by what took place last night at the duke's, I am sorry for it, and ask your forgiveness."

"Foolish boy," cried Ailred, "of what avail is my forgiveness? Thou hast as little wit in thy repentance as in thy fault. The duke's forgiveness is more to thy purpose. What a turmoil dost thou make about thy opinion? What was it I demanded of thee! To deny thy creed, forswear thy country, or forsake thy king? I did but seek to keep thee to thy place, which thou presumedst to forsake for an apish fancy of crazy dates and figures that have stuffed thy brain within till common sense was elbowed on the outside. I bade thee hold thy peace, and thou wouldst not. That was thy fault, and is thy fault, and shall be thy fault until thou hast humbled thy proud heart to seek forgiveness for it."

"Of thee, father, I do," said Kenric, anxiously, "but not of the duke."

"Of the duke thou must and shalt!" cried Ailred.

Kenric was silent.

"Have patience with him, Ailred!" said Domnona.

"I will not have patience," cried her husband. "I will have what I like! Look at him, how he smiles at that! Out of my sight, witless!" he cried, losing all self-command. "If pride will be father, and mother, and duke, and house, and food, and clothing, and all to thee,

away with it elsewhere, for thou shalt not inherit a bean stalk that is mine!"

Kenric, who never dreamed that his father's anger could proceed to so serious a length as this, started and looked astounded.

"Oh, husband," said Domnona, "will you renounce your child?"

"I can and will," cried Ailred, "unless he will consent to go with me to the duke on my return."

"This is harder, and harder," said Kenric.

"And it will be harder still," cried Ailred, "if it be not done ere long. So let him decide before we meet again, whether he will take the fortune which I offer him, or go to seek his own."

CHAPTER XXIV.

SAYING this, he hurried out of the house, leaving Domnona afflicted and irresolute; while Kenric, spreading his hands over his eyes, remained standing in the middle of the floor.

"Run after him, Kenric!" said his mother, "run after him at once, and tell him you are ready to consent. How could you part in anger with your father?"

Still Kenric did not move.

"He is past the stream already," cried Domnona, after looking out of the wicket door; "run, Kenric, run, or you will not overtake him."

"Mother," said Kenric, in a tremulous voice, and uncovering a face that now looked pale and frightened, "I am afraid it is a demon that possesses me, but I cannot cast him out."

"You can, my child," exclaimed the anxious mother;

"fly from him ! he never will follow you to your father's feet."

After another pause, Kenric said :

"I would go, mother, only for one thing, and that is what he said about disinheriting me. The duke would think it was because I was afraid of that."

"And wilt thou forbear to do right," said his mother, "for fear of what the duke may think ? The duke will think all the better of thee, and thou wilt think the better of thyself, and there is one beside, my child, who will think the better of thee also."

"I will consider of it," said Kenric, going towards the door.

"Do not, my darling !" cried Domnona, seizing his hand, "I warn thee do not ! Thy course is plain enough, and do not go to parley with bad thoughts."

"I will consider of it, mother," repeated Kenric, in a trembling voice ; "let me go, mother ; I will think about it."

He left the house, and slept that night at his uncle's. It was a troubled night, nor did the morning bring him peace. Often did he resolve upon yielding to his father's will, but ever some new argument arose to unfix his mind again ; and the longer he deliberated, the greater appeared the difficulty of retracing his steps, the more unjust appeared the duke, the harsher seemed his father, and the more bitter became the humiliation of compliance. A second day went by, and a third, and his foot had not been seen upon his father's threshold. Every succeeding morning only found him more at rest in his state of alienation. The days, instead of being consumed, as they were at first, in deep and troubled reflection on the circumstances by which this was occasioned, were now spent in rambling through the neighbourhood, taking a part in the whimsical amusements of the town, or in listening at evenfall, near the bridge, as in his boyhood, to the wild

songs and stories of the wandering harpers, who still continued to frequent the place. These coming on him in his unsettled state, brought with them fancies and visions that had long been kept at a distance by severe habits of study, and a persevering regularity of life, and still further withdrew his mind from the thoughts that were most necessary to him. An accident decided his destiny.

One morning, while he was engaged in assisting Vusfræa in his task of instruction, there came to the school a singular-looking man, having a quantity of books, with which he travelled through the country, for the purpose of disposing of them at the different schools. Entering into conversation with Vusfræa, he displayed a depth of erudition and a degree of skill in argument which wholly fascinated Kenric, and annoyed Vusfræa by so many discomfitures, that the old disciplinarian afterwards said, he doubted him for being little better than he ought to be. He also manifested an extensive acquaintance with the manners of other countries, particularly those of the north, with which Kenric was but little acquainted. His youth, he told them, had been passed in that part of Scandinavia called Sitheod,* which bordered on the Gulf of Bothnia, and he had been left on those coasts by the Sea-Kings, in one of their descents for the purpose of plunder. Since that time, he had devoted himself, as far as his poverty permitted him, to letters, and was now about to proceed to Cairgrant,† in East Anglia, whose hapless sovereign, in Kenric's childhood, had paid so dearly for his confidence in the now repentant Offa; and which was still distracted by continual political tumults. There, however, as the stranger asserted, the greatest encouragement was afforded to learning, and merit ever certain of distinction.

On the following night, as Kenric lay awake, the pro-

* Sweden

† Cambridge.

ject entered his mind of performing the long journey thither, unassisted, with this stranger, and there, in the phrase of Ailred, seeking his own fortune. Now, moreover, for the first time in his life a pleasure, of a new and a disturbing kind, took place of the home-bred serenity which, of late, though often clouded, had still maintained its sunny empire in his heart. He thought, and his mind darkened as the suggestion grew upon it, that it would be a good thing to work out, single-handed, his way to eminence and to condition, without any aid from those who valued their assistance at a price so painful. The dream soon filled his soul, and a greedy imagination ran ardently through all the details of a future, brilliant with renown and fortune. The spirit of pride, having already secured her conquest, handed over her blinded captive to the spirit of ambition, and between them, peace and liberty were lost. Little prospect was there now of Kenric's returning to his father's house, and receiving his forgiveness. The natural authority of the latter no longer appeared to overbalance the hardness of his demand; and Kenric, after spending a sleepless and a feverish night, arose in the morning, an altered being; no longer wavering in mind; full of activity and ardour, as he had been before his leaving home; but the flame was kindled at a different fire. Restless, eager, and anxious, every hour appeared lost until he had procured from his father's dwelling his small share of property, consisting chiefly of books and apparel. The greater portion of the latter he left in the keeping of his uncle, taking with him only the Anglo-Saxon dress, which he wore in order to avoid any appearance that might excite a troublesome curiosity on the road, and a small bundle, containing his handsome Gallic attire, together with half a dozen manuscripts on coarse vellum; a treasure far more costly, among which his own small treatises were not forgot.

Having made all ready, he bade farewell to old Vuscfræa, whose influence it may be judged could hardly alter his resolution, after that of his parents had failed. More than once he thought of leaving the town without even returning to bid them farewell; for he knew his father, far from consenting to his project, would only increase in anger at the hearing it. But affection, and an idea that there might appear a want of courage in a secret departure, made him reject the suggestion, and he went on a Sabbath evening, the eighth after his first absence, to inform them both of his resolution. He found only Ailred in the house, his mother being at church. As he supposed, his father was astonished, and displeased beyond all bound at this scheme, which resembled nothing that he could have expected. Kenric, however, already prepared for this, was obstinate, and answered not a word (an unusual symptom) to all his father said. Perplexed by this silence, Ailred, after he had expressed with the utmost vehemence his detestation of the folly of this new notion, changed his manner a little at the end, and said in a more quiet tone :

“Wilt thou tell me if thou art really bent upon this brainless project? The duke is ready, I tell thee he is willing, to receive thee. It was but last night he asked to see thy treatise of the stars, and in a tone that showed me he had spoken hastily before. The duke is forgiving—I—thou rebel! I am forgiving also, and wilt thou alone be obstinate? Once more I ask thee, art thou bent upon this scheme?”

Kenric answered now in the affirmative, with less hesitation than he had when first he brought his mind to utter it.

“Then go,” cried Ailred, in a voice that, in spite of his change, struck fear into the heart of Kenric, “go, follow your own course, and see if it will better mine.”

He was hastening from the place, with a countenance

inflamed with passion, when Kenric suddenly threw himself on his knees before him.

"Father," said he, "give me at least thy blessing on my journey."

"My blessing, hypocrite! My blessing!" cried Ailred, "it is the blessed Sabbath, so thou shalt only go without it."

With these words he departed. Domnona, entering shortly after, found her son still lingering in the place, but he said nothing to her of what had passed. He bade her good night in a confused and hurried manner, without even telling her, as he had designed, of his projected journey, or heeding much the instances she used to detain him. The following morning beheld him, with the vender of books, crossing the mountain road that led from his native valley, to which he now bade, notwithstanding the fervour of his awakening passion, a farewell of bitter and not untroubled grief. The recollection of what his mother must feel at his leaving home without a parting word to her, who had loved him so truly and so tenderly, already gave him some experience of remorse and shame, but neither these nor better feelings were any longer powerful enough to induce him to return again to his father's dwelling.

When Ailred heard of the departure of his son, his own feeling of disappointment was in some degree mitigated by the triumph which it afforded him over the judgment of Vuscfraëa and of his wife, at whose instance he had been early induced to send his son to Inisfail for education.

"This," said he, "is the fruit of rearing youth to letters; taking their fingers from the plough, or the sword-hilt, to be cramped with the scrawling and scratching of dried sheep-skins, of no use, that I can see, except to turn men's eyes awry, to hoop the back, to stuff the brain with thoughts only good for perplexing honest men,

and the breast with the insufferable fumes of pride ! Praised be the Sea-kings of the north, against whom Vuscfraëa rails so hard for their book-burning on the coast of Charlemagne ! A blessing on their labours, and may they never want fire while the monks supply such fuel ! I would their hands had fallen on Kenric's rubbish. And were it Kenric only I had lost, there were some comfort left ; but what, what now shall repay the cost, the heavy cost, of his education charges ? So much to fit him out to Inisfail, so much to France, and all the treasure squandered on virtuous books ! Surely some strange illusion warped my sense when first I yielded up my own clear judgment, to let myself be guided by a woman and a scholar !”

On Domnona the ungrateful conduct of their child produced a deeper and more lasting impression. The idea continually haunted her, and was strengthened by the timid disposition of mind occasioned by her ill health, that her own misgovernment and weak-minded indulgence had occasioned the ruin of Kenric, and that had she been a better mother, he would not have proved so bad a son. This reflection, not altogether unfounded, weighed heavily upon her mind, and produced an effect which will appear in the sequel.

CHAPTER XXV.

LEAVING Kenric to pursue his adventurous journey to East Anglia, we will now return to Elim, whom we left in the hands of Tuathal, on his way to the prison of the Coom. It was bright moonlight as they crossed the bridge, and Tuathal, after sincerely condoling with the Ithian on his misfortune, entered into a long conversation, by far the greater part of which was borne by himself,

upon the respective history and manners of the O'Haedhas and his own tribe.

"I would," said he, "that the Ard-Drai had spared thee but a single day that thou mightest have the satisfaction of witnessing a single muster in the Coom. Since the Ard-Drai has laid down the gen and sciath, the charge of our warlike force devolves on me, and never task was laid on hands more willing. Thou seest that long and reed-roofed building on the river side, with the moon now shining full upon its oaken front?"

"I do," said Elim, with a listless air.

"In that," resumed Tuathal, "we keep two hundred chariots of all kinds, from the ornamented carbud, which sometimes bears Eithne to one of the Christian convents in the neighbourhood, to the terrific carbud-searrdha,* with its glittering scythes and barbed hooks, that make the battle-field a bloody harvest. On the other side are the stables of our marc-sluadh, where the snorting of the steeds (the true Asturian breed) even now disturbs the midnight stillness of the valley. Behind it is an armourer's forge, in which, returning from the festival, the workman has already resumed his toil; and yonder, where thou seest a guard of gallóglachs, is our armoury. And here," said he, pointing to a building at no great distance from the Dun, "is the Carcair na ngiall, the chief prison of the Coom, where thou must wait the common chance of war."

Elim raised his eyes, and beheld before him an edifice of moderate size, surrounded by a moat which was supplied with water through a subterranean passage from the river. It was defended by a breastwork of earth and stone, bound with felled trees, and surmounted by a strong palisading. Passing a little drawbridge, they entered the prison by a strong door, formed of a single

* See Note 3.

piece of oak, and descending a flight of broad stone steps, found themselves in an extensive chamber, comfortable and unsupplied with any other furniture than some heaps of rushes which seemed meant for places of repose. Here Elim was left to such rest as he might find in such a place and under such circumstances, while Tuathal, with Eimhir and the gallóglachs, kept guard without ; now singing as he walked to and fro in the moonlight, now addressing himself in a loud tone to the gallóglachs, and sometimes to the prisoner. Sudden and cruel as this destiny appeared to Elim, he was too well accustomed to the mastership of his own mind (that best of subjects, or most formidable of rebels), to suffer himself to be cast down by what appeared inevitable. Drawing a small crucifix from his bosom, and contemplating it in motionless silence for some moments, he addressed himself to his devotions, and spent some time in prayer. This duty performed, he drew from the lining of his tunic a string of tablets of beechen wood, and with a pencil of black slate wrote down in the oghaim, or occult writing of the senachies, his last wishes with regard to his sept, trusting that he might find some opportunity of transmitting it to Macha. A brazen grating in the massy wall, gave him a view of a portion of the vale, bounded by a lofty range of crag which descended in almost a perpendicular line upon the river, the bubbling of which he could faintly hear in the stillness of the moonlight calm. Near the water's edge, at no considerable distance, appeared the forge of the armourer, strongly illuminated, and throwing its glowing light across the paly surface of the stream, while the strokes of the workman, even at this late hour, re-echoed with a lonesome sound along the shaded crags. Not indifferent to his fate, but yet prepared to meet it, Elim consoled himself with the recollection, that his sept had already found able protectors in the Ceannfinny, and in Macha, and resigned himself with his best efforts to

the termination of his own career, and the disappointment of his earthly hopes. Never much given to the indulgence of what is called sensibility (too often the fruitful source of fancied and of real misery), he was the better enabled to meet the present crisis without disturbance of mind.

He had not been long alone when the door opened, and he beheld the gaunt figure of Duach descending the steps. The kern, who admired the constancy of demeanour exhibited by the young chieftain, had come to commiserate his situation, and to offer what services he could for its alleviation.

"Thy bones," said he, "at least, shall slumber with thy people. I, that carried thee living, can carry thee dead. Drawing water they would keep thee ever in the sight of bright Samhuin,* wert thou to have thy carn in the Coom; the shades of our own sept, I mean. Thou wilt rest quieter with thine own people; the O'Haedhas shall sing thy praise and raise thy carn."

Elim thanked the kern, and recollecting what Eithne had said of his fidelity to any trust which he had once undertaken, determined to make him the bearer of his last testament to Inbhersceine. The latter now entered into a free discourse with the Ithian, making particular enquiries concerning all the localities of the harbour of Fionntragha, the scene of that celebrated fight, the memory of which seemed ever floating like a hallucination on his mind.

Soon after he observed the kern pacing up and down the room with gigantic strides, striking with his arms through the empty air, and mouthing in a furious manner but without uttering a sound. After contemplating him with astonishment for some minutes, the Ithian exclaimed :

* See Note 15.

"In the name of sanity, Duach, wilt thou tell me **what** these gestures mean?"

Duach stopping short in his career, looked over his shoulder, and said :

"Didst thou ever hear a Fochlucan relate the narrative of the Cath Fionntragha?"

"Never," answered Elim.

Without permission granted or asked, Duach planted himself in the centre of the prison, in the attitude of one about to utter an oration, and Elim, conceiving that he should be less interrupted by his speech than his questions, suffered him to proceed, while he lay down on one of the rush beds, and soon lost all consciousness of the presence of the kern. In the meantime, the latter, in a voice of thunder, and with his huge arms swinging on all sides, like the sails of a windmill, commenced the redoubted narrative :

"In the days of old, there reigned in Hesperia, a renowned, magnanimous, and heroic king, called Daire Donn Mac Lascein Lomlunig, who styled himself king of kings, and lord of the universe. Having subdued all parts of the known world, Ireland only excepted, and being informed that an island remained unconquered, he immediately dispatched couriers to his tributary kings and princes, with positive orders to join him with their respective forces : to the mighty and powerful kings of France, of Spain, of Denmark, of Greece, of India ; to Mongân Muncuscaí Mac Domhna, king of Getulia, to the king of Cyprus, to——"

The catalogue of potentates was cut short by the opening of the prison door, which made Duach start and seize his javelin with a sudden cry of "Daire Donn a-bo! Who is there?"

The ceasing of the thunder-sounding narrative awakened Elim, who was much surprised at seeing Duach with javelin raised in act to strike. While he sat still

half asleep, in this condition, he heard low voices at the door, which, opening presently, admitted Banba, wrapped in a purple cloak and hood, through which the Ithian recognized her figure, and bearing in her hand a lighted lamp.

The astonishment with which Eithne, on the arrival of Tuathal, had learned the real name and rank of the young Ithian prisoner, was mingled with a singular impression of pleasure. She had heard much since her arrival in the Coom of the active government of O'Haedha, and of his successful exertions in promoting the peaceful prosperity of his people. She had heard all this, it is true, through the lips of persons prejudiced against Elim, by feudal enmity, by attachment to those abuses which it was the Ithian's object to remove, and by jealousy of all improvement. Through the colouring, however, of this prejudice, Eithne had penetration enough to discern, in the character of the new Ithian chief, a mind and understanding very superior to those of his censurers, high views of human happiness, and an ardent benevolence. She observed, likewise, with a feeling of secret pleasure and surprise, that the spirit of his government, and his conception of the causes which occasioned the evils of his country, were precisely those which she had long wished to see adopted by the princes of the island; and she had often, in playful discourse with the Ard-Drai, longed for the government of a sept, in order that she might confute him with example. The history of the old dissension between the sept of O'Haedha and the Ard-Drai was not unknown to her; but whatever the question of Baseg's right might be, it appeared to her atrocious that this unoffending chief should be sacrificed to the barbarian vengeance of the Ard-Drai. She determined, therefore, at any hazard, to effect his freedom; and it was with this view, after a new interview with the

Ard-Drai, that Banba now was sent to summon the young Ithian once more to the Dun.

Rising quickly, and passing the guard, who made way for him in silence, O'Haedha approached the deserted building, accompanied by Duach and his wife, and escorted by two well-armed gallóglachs. On entering the outer chamber, now lonely with its expiring lights and scattered flowers, he saw Eithne standing on the floor, with her veil close drawn about her shoulders, and seeming to be wrapt in thought. At a little distance sat the Ard-Drai, looking out in silence on the moonlit river.

"Ithian," said the latter, as Elim appeared before him, "reflection has been thy friend. It has told me that forgiveness is the parent of good-will, and better is friendship with loss, than enmity with gain. Thou art free to go as thou hast come, but with the condition that all thy prisoners be restored unharmed."

Surprised as he was at the sudden change of purpose, Elim offered little in reply, farther than to accept the conditions on which his liberty was granted; stipulating, nevertheless, that the loss his people had sustained in their property should be made good by their aggressors. To this the Ard-Drai consented, at the same time signifying to Elim that he must depart at once, as, if he were to wait till morn, the relatives of the deceased might make his journey dangerous. There appeared to Elim, in the manner of the Ard-Drai, a singular absence of all recollection of former injury; nor could he himself avoid, at times, almost forgetting, in the open, unconscious manner of the Druid, that he really beheld the person who had left him fatherless in childhood. Rightly supposing that he was indebted to the influence of Eithne for this final resolution, he addressed her at his departure, in terms of the warmest gratitude.

"For thy sake, kindest maiden," he said, "thy kinsmen shall be transmitted to the Coom as tenderly as if they

were our own. Farewell ! I owe thee life, and will not soon forget it."

So saying, and hastening to the place where Duach held his hobbie and his dog, he travelled homeward in the moonlight, not regretting the pursuit which had introduced him to a being whose mind and dispositions seemed almost moulded on his own. He was accompanied for a considerable part of the way by Duach, who left him after he had passed the frontier. The sun was fully risen when he arrived at Inbherisceine, where he found all assembled under arms, and in extreme confusion at his absence. In a few days, Moyel was dispatched, with a party of mounted hobblers to convey the prisoners to the Coom, and so ended for the present the adventure of the Druid's valley.

Two months had rolled away before accident again brought Elim into commerce with its inhabitants. In the mean time he applied himself vigorously to the prosecution of his designs. Having succeeded to his utmost wishes in establishing a regular order of industry and peace in his own sept, he next turned his attention to the second part of his plan—the extending the intercourse of his sept with those of the surrounding princes, and establishing a general system of trade. So haughty, however, were the great body of those chieftains, and so little disposed to second the young chieftain's views, that his success was but indifferent. At the provincial Feis, which was held at the court of Artri, in Luimneach na Long, O'Haedha made his first appearance in a legislative assembly. Before the Righ, the Airés, the lesser chieftains, and the clergy, he modestly unfolded his views, and enforced them with all the eloquence of which he was master. To some, who objected that the warlike character of the country was better preserved by keeping the septs apart, Elim proved the contrary, by the discipline of his own, the superiority of which none ventured to contest.

He showed that, instead of upholding the principle of justice—the true foundation and support of military courage—such party bigotry tended only to perpetuate family feuds, and to engender hideous passions in the national character.

The king, Artri, was amongst the first who favored Elim, and warmly seconded his views. Others, who preferred the renown of their own names to the glory and happiness of the country, held aloof, and said with scorn, that they did not want to see the isle transformed into a nation of “ceannuighes.” Artri, however, and a few of the most candid, entered heartily into Elim’s spirit of improvement and of union. Roads were made, and harbours opened; officers were appointed, by general election at the Feis, to protect and regulate the affairs of trade along the coast, and in the inland towns; with power to dismiss the refractory and the dishonest. Thus prosperous in his efforts, Elim returned to his sept with a great increase of influence, and doubly ardent in the pursuit of his designs.

Soon after an instance was afforded him of the extremes into which his countrymen were sometimes hurried by the national spirit he deplored, and in a quarter to which he often turned in his moments of reflection. One day it happened that he accompanied O’Driscoll, his uncle, who had been for some time at Inbhersceine, to that part of the coast where the small vessel lay at anchor that was to convey him to the Ceannfinny’s house at Cléir. Before noon they had weighed anchor, and Elim, riding at the head of his troop along the sandy beach, watched the course of the stout little yew vessel, until it was hidden from his view by a rocky projection of the land.

On a sudden, Moyel pointed out to the observation of his chieftain, a party of mounted gallóglaachs, galloping swiftly along the margin of the sea. On their nearer approach, the Ithian perceived that the first rider was

Tuathal, and his countenance betrayed, as he approached, a strange mixture of agitation and of joy. A band of marauders had entered the Druid's valley at midnight, setting fire to the shielings and the standing corn, driving the herds, and penetrating at length to the very Dun of the Chief Druid. He had not time, he said, at present, to make Elim acquainted with the details, for the Ard-Drai had been grievously wounded, and he was now hastening to Rath-Aedain, to entreat the advice of Finnghín, the famous surgeon of the sept. If O'Haedha, however, chose to accompany him to the Coom, he might count on a safe conduct there and home again, and could satisfy himself upon the scene of the calamity.

Elim readily assented, bidding Moyel return with the escort and inform his parent in what direction he was gone, as also to command the immediate departure of Finnghín. On the way, as they rode rapidly along through glen and woodland, Tuathal informed him of the cause of the aggression which they had suffered.

"The Ard-Drai," said he, "was somewhat nice on points of hereditary right, and not a little positive in enforcing them. Understanding from the old Brehon, that the chieftain of the Delvins had been in old times the vassal of his ancestors, he sought to renew the claim, by sending him as *tuarasdal* (or wages conferred by a superior on his dependent), a present of forty kine, as many copper cauldrons, as many crimson cloaks, and as many gold-handled swords. The chieftain, however, not only rejected the gifts, but sent double the quantity in return. The Ard-Drai, in rejecting these, was rash enough to speak harshly of the giver, and, in allusion to his talent for verse-making, which is acknowledged to be great, had the misfortune to call him a 'rhymer.' For this offence he has wasted our valley, entered it, contrary to all law and honour, in the night-time, and I fear the Ard-Drai's life will pay the forfeit of his taunt. I grieve

for it on Eithne's account, for she loved him like a father."

On entering the Coom nothing could exceed the picture of desolation which was presented to the eyes of Elim. A number of newly-erected cairns appeared along the river side; whole sides of the mountain ground were blackened from the recent conflagration; shrieks were heard at intervals; and female figures were seen, some flying in various directions, some sitting down and crying aloud by their ruined shielings. On arriving at the Dun they found it crowded with anxious faces, shadowed by the overhanging hood, and expressing the different emotions of grief, impatience, curiosity, and pity. In the inner room, he was told, was the wounded Ard-Drai, with his niece, who had not left his pillow since he had been laid upon it. Some hours passed away, during which Elim saw no one from whom he could obtain a distinct account of what had taken place, except old Eogan Bel, the story-teller, who told him that he knew something of the kind would take place, for he had looked at morning through the blade-bone of a wolf, and saw spots of blood on the wall. The following were the circumstances, some idea of which he was enabled to collect from the old *dresbdeartach*.

"The silence of night had sunk upon the valley, and nearly all, except the inmates of the Dun, were at repose. The Ard-Drai, who, only in that very week, had sent back the tuarasdal of the lord of the Delvins, was still extremely troubled at the affront which had been offered him, and paced up and down the apartment in high indignation. Eithne, who sat on her tripod, observing him in silence, with a mixture of pity and affection, ventured at length to break in upon his reflections.

"'Dear father,' she said, 'why will you suffer such a trifle to prey upon your spirits?'

"'A trifle!' said the Ard-Drai, stopping short, and

gazing steadfastly upon her ; ‘ a trifle, for this cast-away child of Cathair-More, this keeper of mercenaries, a hireling *boailim sciath*, to send tuarasdal to the head of the sept of Coom nan Druadh, one of the oldest stocks that bloom in Inisfail ? A secret stabber too ! he has been known ere now to deal an underhand blow against an enemy. A trifle ! It is thus you women ever judge. What touches not your own thin flaxen follies, your spindles, your distaffs, and your love-tales, are trifles, though the honour of a sept be brought in question. Tuarasdal to me ! An ancestor of mine was slain at the Tor Conaing, on Tor Inis,* the palace of the Fomharaigh, almost the earliest colonists of Erinn. Tuarasdal to me ! Beinn Eddair,† Muirtheimne, Magh Laighean, a thousand other fights, bore testimony to the honour of our name, before the ancestor of this Delvin mercenary had got a cantred of his own to rest on.’

“ ‘ Yet, is it not a trifle, dearest father,’ continued Eithne, ‘ compared with the peace of your own mind, the quiet of two great townships, and the happiness of Inisfail ? Ah, pride of birth, and rivalry of place and station, will keep our isle from peace, as long as there are senachies and bards in Erinn. But hark ! what sound is in the Coom ?’ ”

“ ‘ It is the muttering of thunder on the crags,’ said Eogan.

“ ‘ It cannot be,’ said the Ard-Drai, ‘ for the night, though moonless, is without a cloud. It is the rushing of a torrent in the bed of the river. The rain has fallen heavy on the mountains, though here the weather has been dry and sunny.’ ”

“ They were silent for some minutes.

“ ‘ Father ?’ said Eithne, springing from her seat, and flying to the old man’s side ; ‘ dear father, do you hear ?’ ”

* Torry Island, off the coast of Donegal. † The Hill of Howth.

“ ‘Well, Eithne? Well, my child?’ said the old man, caressing her head with one hand, while she clung to his arm in intense anxiety.

“ ‘It is not thunder!—it is no torrent!’ said the maiden, in a voice below her breath; then, with a sudden shriek of woe and terror, she exclaimed: ‘O father, save thy people! save thyself! There are enemies in the Coom! It is the shout of men that we have heard.’

“At the same instant, the galloping of many hundred horse was heard in the calm night along the river side; lights rose in the distance until the sky grew red with the deep reflection, and shouts, like those of a ferocious multitude, were mingled with piteous shrieks, and cries of the most heart-piercing anguish. It was the lord of the Delvins who had come to seek satisfaction for having been called a ‘rhymer’ by the Ard-Drai.

“ ‘To arms! The trompa! Sound the alarm at once!’ cried the old man, ‘Eithne to your chamber! Tuathal, to the Carcair! Guard you the armoury and stables, and leave the Dun to me.’

“The surprise, however, was too complete to render it possible for the inhabitants of the valley to offer any effectual resistance. In a short time all was ruin, with the exception of the Dun, and the places committed to the charge of Tuathal, where the fight was still maintained with desperate vigour. The invaders passed the bridge, and the battle raged before the very threshold of the Dun. They were repulsed from this last hold, but not until the Ard-Drai’s taunt was, at least, adequately avenged. While the fight continued on the bridge, a shriek was heard from the interior of the Dun, and many rushed to the protection of the Ard-Drai’s niece.

“The cry, however, was not for herself. On reaching the entrance of the recess, they found the Ard-Drai lying speechless, and with the look of a dying man, upon the floor, while Eithne, with an appearance of dismay and

settled horror, was staunching, with her veil, the blood which flowed from a wound in his neck. In the mean time the pursuit continued in the Coom, and Elim learned with surprise that great part of the inhabitants were still absent from the place, engaged, as it was supposed, in the work of retaliation. Among others, Duach was not to be found, and his absence increased the anxiety of Eithne."

Scarcely had Eogan concluded his narrative, when the hanging which veiled the door of the Ard-Drai's chamber was put aside, and Tuathal looking out, beckoned to the Ithian chief that he might enter. Elim arose immediately and obeyed the signal. The light in the sick room was so dull that it was some time before he could clearly discern the figure of Eithne, sitting on a heap of wolf skins, by the Ard-Drai's bed. She turned around on the entrance of the Ithian, and without rising, greeted him in the kindest manner. Her grief, though deep-seated, was not of that selfish and ungovernable kind which sacrifices all consideration of others to its own indulgence; and Elim could not help admiring the simple and natural courtesy with which, even under the pressure of such deep calamity, she expressed pleasure at the sight of a stranger, to whom she had been once of service. Soon after the aged Finnghín arrived, accompanied by his three overgrown daltadhs, whose faces, solemn even in scenes of joy, assumed on this occasion a sepulchral ghastliness of aspect; looking, as Banba said, "like owls assembling on a cairn." While the old Finnghín was busy in examining the wound of Curaoi, one of these disciples asked Eithne to assist in preparing some simples for the dressing, and raised her spirits a little by relating numerous instances of astonishing cures, which they had made, in their course of practice. These hopes, however, were entirely banished when she heard, as Finnghín raised his head, and looked on those around him, the despair-

ing proverb that "the king's war surgeon would not save him."

Understanding this to be the case, the Ard-Drai desired that he might be placed before the outer entrance of the Dun, in order that he might behold the valley ere he died. His wish was gratified, and he remained surrounded by his silent friends awaiting the last pulse of life. On his right stood Eithne and the Ithian; on his left were Finnghin, Eogan, and others of the household; while ranged in the back-ground, like sentinels of death, appeared the motionless frames, huge eyes and pendant cheeks, of the three daltadhs. To Elim's whispered question, Eithne replied, that all her influence had been tried in vain to induce him to prepare for death, or even to forgive his enemy. Still the occasion seemed so desperate that Eithne, trusting to his love for her, addressed him once again in a calm and measured voice :

"Ard-Drai," she said, gazing on his face with an expression of the tenderest interest, and raising one hand with a slight admonitory air, "I entreat thee, by thy love for Carthann, and by thy reverence for my father's spirit, if thou wilt not die as Carthann died, at least depart in peace with all mankind."

"With all, except the Delvins," answered the Ard-Drai.

"With them too, father," said his niece, "forgive them too, if thou wouldst be forgiven."

"I forgive the O'Haedhas, and the O'Driscoll's but I cannot forgive the Delvins," answered the wounded man.

"Father," said Eithne, "Carthann has warned thee ; I have warned thee. Thou hast had time enough, and it is coming to an end. At least, at least, forgive the Delvins, father."

The Ard-Drai paused, and continued looking out in silence on the Coom. The sun had long gone down, but

his yellow light still rested on the broken summit of the crags. On a sudden the guards were heard to challenge on the bridge, and presently a gory figure, panting heavily, and seeming quite exhausted, appeared upon the threshold, bearing in one hand a bloody scian, while with the other, he held suspended by the long red hair a human head, the features of which still quivered with the dying agony.

"Conn Crethir go bragh !" shouted Duach, as he flung the ghastly burthen on the ground, and sunk bereft of strength upon the threshold.

"It is the chieftain of the Delvins' head," said Eogan.

All started at the sudden apparition. The Ard-Drai raised himself on his elbow to look upon the gory trophy, and said with a shocking and revengeful smile :

"The rhymer ! the paltry rhymer !"

At the same instant, sinking back upon his couch, he died. Eithne raised up her hands with a cry of terror and of anguish, and was conveyed in deep affliction to her chamber.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE tidings spread through the valley and increased its desolation. Deep gloom abode upon the Coom, and every aspect wore the character of woe. Elim, who keenly participated in this sorrow of a people for a beloved ruler, remained at the Dun to witness the celebration of the wake. The Ard-Drai's niece did not again appear throughout the ceremony. The Dun was crowded with the nearer friends of the deceased prince, while numbers, whom the building could not accommodate,

remained without upon the platform, where they were served with the same refreshments which were prepared for those within. The most mournful strains were played from time to time by the solitary harp of Irial, the principal cruitiré. In the morning preparations were made for interring the body according to the ancient Druid forms.

The place selected for the burial was, according to the Ard-Drai's own desire, that part of the islet, which adjoined the bridge. Before sunrise the procession began to move from the open dwelling. First came the troop of kerne,* two by two, and followed by the corpse, borne in its shroud, between six bare-headed gallóglachs. Next came four Druid flamens, in their robes of white, with emblematic representations of the heavenly bodies which they venerated, and close behind in garments of the six bright colours allowed to the royal and the learned, the Ard-bre-hon, with his scroll of written laws, of fiscal and of mensal rights, and the Ard-seanachie with his roll of genealogies and family history. These were followed by the Ard-file and Ard-cruitiré, also in robes of white, but wearing the barread and golden ring. Then came a group of women mourners, with long white kerchiefs on their heads, and voices loud in grief. The procession was closed, as it began, by a body of kerne, and drew after it a long train of men, women, and children, warriors, shepherds and agriculturists, who mourned scarce less for their chieftain's death, than for their own ruin. On arriving at the place of interment, they found a grave open, composed of burnt brick and cement, in the form of a coffin, the bottom being of smooth marble, and bearing various inscriptions of the name, the age, the rank, and family of the deceased. In this the corpse was laid, with his armour on, and a sword by his side. The Druids

* See Note 33. Kernes and Gallóglachs.

having performed their rites, the Ard-seanachie arose, and standing at the head of the grave, which lay to the west, recited aloud the pedigree of the deceased, which he traced from his father up to Partholan, the first colonist of the isle. When he had ceased, the sounds of mournful music broke upon the rite, and the *Racairé* (rhapsodist) followed up the ceremony by a species of extemporaneous song entitled the *caoin*, in which were enumerated the many virtues of the deceased. The multitude at length, as if overcome by the exciting strain, united in one wail of grief, after which the body of the chieftain, with his arms, was covered in with a flag exactly fitting the orifice of the tomb. The drawbridge was then let down, and each of the spectators, as he passed, cast a stone upon the mound, until a heap was raised above of a prodigious height. This ceremony was continued by new comers through the day, until the cairn had received its tribute from every hand in the Coom. The evening came at length, and the bereaved people returned with heavy hearts to their several places of abode, to converse by their hearths, or near their ruined dwellings, on this disastrous change, and to meditate on the uncertainty of human happiness.

On the following day, Tuathal was elected Ard-Drai in the room of the deceased. The Ithian remained to see him receive the white wand before he turned his steps once more to Inbherseeine. In the course of some months, the rumour was general of a marriage between Elim and the Ard-Drai's niece. The latter, after the death of her protector, had remained in the Dun under the protection of Eire, the mother of the new Ard-Drai, an aged Druidess, with the haughtiest blood of her exclusive tribe within her veins. Long jealous of Eithne's influence over the Ard-Drai, she used little ceremony in the assertion of her newly acquired power, and made the change to the young orphan so painful, that she meditated

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withdrawing herself from the place, and seeking shelter in the court of Artri.

This resolution was delayed by her attachment to the Coom, of which a portion was now exclusively her own, and finally prevented by a new course of events. On her own holding, the exclusive regulations, which were still maintained on that of the Ard-Drai, were not enforced; and O'Headha was frequently amongst the visitors to the small dwelling which Carthann had erected in this portion of the valley. Here their acquaintance ripened into intimate friendship. Equal in mind, in rank, alike in tastes and dispositions, each felt the interest of a relative in the pursuits and prospects of the other. Elim communicated his projects, his progress, and his difficulties, and Eithne heard him with undisguised sympathy, and with silent admiration. Still there was nothing to warrant the rumour above-mentioned; and, as usual, the parties most concerned were the least aware of its existence.

In the course of time, however, their intimacy assumed a form which seemed to furnish ground for the conjecture. By the invitation of Macha, Eithne had spent a moon of social happiness at Inbhersceine, where longer acquaintance secured to her the general regard which her first appearance had bespoke. Old customs and manners, almost forgotten during her long residence among the Druids, had here presented themselves to her view, with all the charm of early association to recommend them, and she looked and listened like one who has escaped from the stagnation of a long imprisonment, to a circle of early friends and associates, all active and cheerful in their old pursuits. She heard from the chieftains, who often visited Rath-Aedain, the latest news of Donnchadh, the Ard-righ, and of Artrigh, her maternal uncle. She admired the new features of social improvement which appeared in Elim's territory, the activity of the inhabitants, their intercourse with surrounding states, their

trade, their intelligence, and their rising wealth. She wondered at the indefatigable ardour of O'Headha, his perseverance, and his unceasing efforts for the welfare of the people, not less than at the evenness of temper and unclouded cheerfulness of heart and mind, with which the whole was executed. Many days were spent in visiting the most remarkable portions of the surrounding scenery, as well as the schools and villages, throughout the territory.

"I had little idea," said Elm, to his young friend, as they returned together from one of those excursions, "when first I entered on the government of my sept, of the difficulties which I should find in effecting what I had long before designed. My power over my people is nominally absolute* (excepting that in cases of oppression they have a privilege of appeal to the provincial, and thence to the national Feis), and yet it is with the utmost caution that I can ever dare to use it. Men are so jealous of authority, even of their own creation; there is such a spirit of selfish pride in our nature, such a difficulty in acknowledging a superior, that it is dangerous to force us, even to our own advantage. Many a more potent governor than O'Haedha has lost his people's confidence, and his own power, to an impatience for their welfare, and a want of care in considering their prejudices. It is also certain, perhaps owing to the same jealousy, that the capability of doing public good, diminishes in proportion as the extent of the sovereign's authority increases. There is no prince in Inisfail, perhaps, who possesses more the affections and the confidence of his sept than I do, and yet I know that I could do more for their advantage as chief officer of a republic, or of a limited monarchy, than now, with absolute power at my disposal. The utmost confusion of ranks, great indolence, or rather

* See Note 34. Power of a Chieftain.

fitful and ill-regulated labour, strong party feuds, and debasing excesses, were very general among the people on my return from Muingharid, and yet the resistance to improvement was only equalled by the general readiness to admit its necessity. In imitation (if I might dare to name an example so sacred) of him who, feeling for the weakness of the nature he had created, commenced his career of spiritual instruction, by diffusing temporal blessings, and thus gained the affections, while he sought to convince the reason, of his hearers ; my first efforts were employed in promoting the actual and unquestioned advantage of the little state, and thus generating a spirit of improvement, so that, before the disagreeable work of reformation was begun, the minds and wishes of a great many had almost anticipated my designs. In a wealthy, ignorant, and licentious district, where the re-enforcement of forgotten sumptuary laws would have excited haughty and indignant feelings, I was content to establish schools, to reach the hearts of the people through their children, and to win their confidence by serving them in their own way. Love of letters is a feature in our national character. Though ignorant themselves, they were pleased to see their sons instructed, and the love of order, public decorum, and good government, became so general there ere long, that the law of *Ilbhreachta*, and the code of *Feidlimidh*, were applied for, while I was awaiting the favourable moment to proclaim them. In another township, poor, proud, and barbarous, the scattered progeny (forgive the allusion) of the ancient ethnic race, where even the establishment of a school would have alarmed all the hereditary prejudices of the people, I was satisfied to give them humbler blessings. They were fishermen, and I improved their curachs and their harbours; establishing a profitable traffic between them and the other townships, Thus disarmed of their fears, the rest was easily done, and the schools and churches

which we have visited to-day are all within that district. The brief experience I have had, convinces me that a governor who wishes to promote the real advantage of his people, must often sacrifice his views to theirs, when they do not violate principles that are immutable."

With such conversation, varied with lighter talk, they reached the valley of Rath-Aedain. Eithne, who was queenly, as Elim was monarchical, in feeling, listened with intelligence and interest, and Elim spoke with the freedom and pleasure which every one experiences in communing with a sympathising mind. They talked of Eithne's approaching return to the Coom, which was fixed for the second day following. The introduction of this subject made Elim silent, and they rode along the valley for some time without speaking. The young chieftain, looking aside, seemed occupied in contemplating the play of the evening sunshine through the scarcely moving boughs.

"But," he said, as if starting from a fit of forgetfulness, "I should never tell thee, Eithne, of my designs, or their success, for I have remarked, that since thy coming to Rath-Aedain, thou hast never once bestowed a word of praise on either. Thou wert freer of thine applause when I was an unknown prisoner in Dun Druid, than now with all my additional recommendations. The proverb has been reversed in my experience. Yet I must not be ungrateful neither. The prisoner was indebted to thee for something more than praise."

Eithne was silent for some time, and said, with a smile :

"Thou canst not justly claim what was acquired by a cheat, for though my commendation was sincere, thou didst not fairly come by it. I took thee only for the most intelligent of O'Haedha's officers ; perhaps, I said, his gallantest toiseach. I little knew how valuable was the life for which I asked. Thou owest me no special

gratitude, for which I should have done the same if thou wert the humblest kern in Inisfail, when I thought thy life was in my hands."

"I would," said Elim quickly, in an earnest voice, "that it were in thy hands again, for ever!"

Eithne, surprised and slightly confused, made no reply; and Elim, himself much moved, and trembling for the effect of what he had said, observed, with relief and hope, as he assisted her to alight within the Rath, the agitation which his words had caused in the mind of the self-governed and unyielding Eithne.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ON the following day, intended to precede that of Eithne's departure, an accident afforded Elim the opportunity of repaying the obligation which he owed to the Ard-Drai's niece, since the first occasion of their meeting. The duties of the morning being discharged, an excursion was proposed to the great cascade, which lay among the Sliabh Miscaisi* range of mountains. Long ere noon, the hobbies which bore the party were footing briskly along the stony way which led to this well-known scene of wonder and of beauty. The company consisted of Elim, Eithne, Atri, the young prince of Leath Mogha, and the old school-fellow of the Ithian (who had lately come hither to meet his cousin during her stay at Inbhersceine), of Melcha, Elim's first instructress, O'Driscoll, her brother, and two or three neighbouring chieftains. Their attendants, a body equally numerous, amongst whom were Moyel and Duach (who had scarce

* Now called "Slieve Miskish."

lost sight of Eithne since she left Rath-Aedain), came after at a moderate distance.

Ascending a rocky mountain, which, at the height of more than two thousand feet, overlooks the sea-green waters of the bay, they found themselves, as they reached the summit, on the borders of a lake, formed by the confluence of many a rivulet, descending from eminences still more lofty. Approaching that portion of the height which looked upon the sea, they suddenly reached the brink of a craggy precipice, descending, in an almost perpendicular line, to a depth of half the mountain. A channel, of about thirty feet across, conducted the waters from the tranquil bosom of the lake, to the brink of this terrific fall. From thence it descended, in a hoary sheet, encountering no resistance till it was dashed to foam and mist upon an enormous ledge of rock at a thousand feet beneath, making the mountain tremble beneath the feet of the travellers. And here they were delighted with a gorgeous spectacle. The mists occasioned by the great concussion reascended in hazy volumes to nearly a third of the mountain height, forming, as the sunshine from the south struck through their hoary involutions, a succession of brilliant irises. Again, outbursting from the base of this vapoury column, the watery mass appeared, bounding in foam and thunder from rock to rock, until it reached a lower precipice, from whence it was conducted by an arched fall to the shore of Inbherisceine.

While they remained gazing in silent enjoyment on this scene, and listening to the mighty sounds that, booming from the depths below, resounded far among the mountain solitudes, Elim, standing apart with the Ard-Drai's niece, endeavoured to renew the conversation of the previous evening. During the morning, the spirits of the latter seemed unusually high, and this circumstance, he knew not why, had rather a depressing effect on Elim's mind.

"Does Eithne," he said at length, in a voice which conveyed an inexpressible feeling of anxiety, respect, and tenderness united, "does Eithne forget what took place last evening, in the valley of Rath-Aedain?"

Eithne, turning aside, covered her eyes with her hand, and seemed for some moments to be wrapt in thought. She said, at length, without changing her posture :

"I never shall forget it, Elim."

"Could I then hope," said the chieftain, thrilled by her words, and the accent in which they were spoken, "that Eithne would permit me to renew it?"

Eithne was once more silent, and, after a longer pause, replied in a tone less firm than before :

"When Elim pleases, so that it be not now."

"It is enough," said Elim, with delight; "it is happiness enough, at present, that Eithne gives me leave to hope."

Soon after, descending the mountain, the party, ignorant of the important scene that had taken place, and wondering at the altered manner both of Eithne and her friend, continued their journey towards the coast. The latter seemed to have regained his spirits rapidly, and conversed as usual, only addressing himself to Eithne, with closer attention than before. Understanding, which was the truth, that their fair guest desired he should defer any further conversation on the subject until she had returned to her patrimonial residence, he at once made up his mind to the restraint, and directed his discourse to indifferent matters, with the force of mind and alacrity of spirits which are generally the property of a well-intentioned disposition. It is singular, nevertheless, although a fact which is recorded on the best authority, that his success in this effort of self-restraint did not seem to increase the cheerfulness of Eithne; but, on the contrary, that she seemed to assume the spiritless mood, according as Elim mastered it. The causes of those changes we

leave to the discussion of others : it is sufficient for us to have related what took place before the eyes of the spectators.

The tide was low, and they continued their journey along the coast. Arriving at the foot of the green lawn which lay before the abode of Finnghín, the physician, O'Haedha was obliged to absent himself for a little time from his company, in order to transact some business with the man of medicine. Before his return, they had scattered themselves in different parts of the shore. O'Driscoll, Melcha, and one or two of the chieftains, having delivered their hobbies to their attendants, were conversing on the green where Elim left them. Eithne, accompanied by her cousin, had crossed, on foot, the sands, not yet covered by the tide, to a mass of rocks at a little distance from the shore, for the purpose of gathering some weed that grew among the yellow maiden-hair with which the rock was clothed. Dúrch, in the mean time, held the horses of both upon the shore. Unlike the general iron-bound character of the coast, which, for the most part meets, with a stern rebuff, the long-travelled waters of the western ocean, they were suffered here to die in peace upon a sandy shore.

"Dost thou not observe," said O'Driscoll, soon after Elim had left them, "that the tide has ceased to advance upon the strand, though it is far from the flood."

"I did not observe the waters," said a chieftain, who sat near, "but, looking out on the ocean, do not that distant point of land and vessel, anchored near, seem strangely lifted in the air?"

"The sea between," said Melcha, "appears as if it had swollen in a singular manner."

"And I hear a sound," added another, "a low deep roar, as if of distant billows, although the wind scarcely moves amongst those branches."

At this moment, Elim reappeared. On looking toward

the sea, he was surprised to observe, that the waters rather fell than rose, and even where they still spread their calm and gently undulating sheet of silver, the craggy and weed-covered deformities, that at long intervals speckled its brightness, showed it to be of a shallowness that was perplexing and preternatural. The true cause of these appearances now darted upon Elim's mind. With a pang of anxiety, he sprung on his horse, and galloped towards the rock where Eithne and Artri were standing.

"To the shore," he shouted aloud, and waved his hand as he approached. "To the shore, at once, for your lives! It is the Death-Wave!"

Artri perplexed, remained where he was. Elim in a few seconds had sprung from his hobbie, placed Eithne without ceremony before him, and remounting, galloped with increasing swiftness to the shore. Artri, totally bewildered, could only follow on foot, at such rate as he was able to use. Duach, who observed with astonishment the action of Elim, sprung on one of the hobbies, and raising his war-cry of "Conn Crethir a-bo!" hastened to the assistance of the young prince. Without even alighting, he lifted him to the horse as if he were a child, and in a few seconds the animal, labouring under a heavier burthen than before, retraced his footprints with diminished speed. Scarcely had Elim reached the higher ground with his charge, when, rising far behind them towards the mouth of the bay, the party on shore beheld the waters swell into that fatal billow, which they had been taught to expect from the sucked-up shallowness of those upon the beach. The range of liquid mountain, gaining fast upon Duach and Artri, rolled gloomily inward with a roar of wakening anger. With breath retained, and looks of eager terror, the group on shore beheld the frightful competition. The billow gathered to its height, the green grew hoary, the summit sharpened,

and was crested with a streaming mist, until, at length, overbalanced by the increasing acclivity, it came crashing to the base, in sheets of streaky white. In an instant the shore presented one great field of foam, the tumult reaching even to the foot of the hillock, which gave the party their security. The prince, the kern, and the hobbie, less fortunate than those who went before them, all three were rolled along the sand, and a cry of agony burst from their hopeless friends. When the uproar subsided, the hobbie reappeared, staggering in shallow water towards the shore; and Duach and Artri were soon after seen bending their strength against the returning current, which fortunately here was not of depth sufficient to hurl them back into the bosom of the waters. The hand of the kern still grasped the girdle of the prince, nor did he relinquish the hold until both had gained the shore.

It was discovered, on examination, that neither had received any more serious injury than the wetting of their garments, and the loss of breath, so that what had threatened to be a fatal accident, in a few minutes became a subject of mirth and laughter. On the way home, Elim was called on to explain the cause of the singular phenomenon which had diversified their day's amusements with so important an adventure. This, however, he was unable to do. It was a circumstance of rare occurrence, and was regarded by the peasantry with a kind of superstitious fear. It took place in the calmest weather, and was spoken of with reluctance by those who lived upon the coast.

Arrived at Rath-Aedain, as soon as the disaster of the young prince was rectified, preparations were made for celebrating, with appropriate festivity, the last evening of Eithne's visit at Rath-Aedain. The hall was lighted up with more than usual splendour; old Connla sung, and Diarmaid played, their deepest and their liveliest; and the dancers gave mirth and spirit to the assembly. In

the course of the evening, Elim showed that he was not so absorbed in the cares of his station as to despise or neglect those lighter accomplishments, which form a necessary and useful relaxation to the more arduous duties of life. During a pause made by the dancers, he took a harp from one of the cruitirés, and accompanied himself in the following song :

I.

Come to Glengariff! come!
 Close by the sea,
 Ours is a happy home
 Peaceful and free.
 There, there, far away,
 Happy by our sunny bay,
 We live from day to day,
 Blithe as the bee,
 For ours is a sunny home,
 Joyous and free,
 Come to Glengariff! come!
 Close by the sea.

II.

Thine is a mountain hoar
 Frowning and wild,
 Ours is a lowland shore
 Fertile and mild.
 There, there, loud and strong,
 Sudden tempests drive along;
 Here, their gentle song
 Scarce moves the tree!
 For ours is a lowland home
 Peaceful and free;
 Come from the mountain! come
 Come to the sea!

Although Eithne's high opinion of the young Ithian was founded on grounds more solid than his talents in the festival, it would be denying her the nature of her sex to assert, that she did not listen with a woman's feelings

to his graceful minstrelsy, or that the slender reasoning thus conveyed, was the least persuasive he had used in the course of their acquaintance. Throughout the evening, at morn, and on her journey homeward, the burthen

Come to Glengariff! come!
Close by the sea!

dwelt on her hearing with increased effect, as absence appropriated the invitation to herself.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE daughter of Carthann arrived in the Coom with something of the feeling of a school-girl, who, after vacation time, revisits the sober stools and every-day faces of an academy. The Coom itself looked dreary beyond expression, and she felt, when passing the little bridge that led to the Dun, as if she were about to enter the gates of a prison-house. The manners of her sept, moreover, appeared to her altered eyes with a strangeness that surprised her; and, added to these subjects of depression, was the lonely look of the Ard-Drai's hearth, by which her eye no longer found the Ard-Drai's reverend figure. He, who loved her with a father's affection, was now lying under a cairn by his native stream; and though she still had much to which her affections clung, there was no intimacy left on which her mind could rest. Some relief she found, however, in the exertions she made to restore her portion of the Druid's valley to the condition in which Carthann once preserved it. Taking Macha for her model, she undertook, with a sanguine and active spirit, the improvement of all the households under her authority, having wisdom enough to commence with her own

Beneath that roof, where she was able to exercise a constant vigilance, her exertions were attended with some success, but the lever of her feminine influence was too slight to lift the heavy mass of indolence that extended all beyond it.

Amongst the numerous families who dwelt in this portion of the Coom nan Druadh, was that of Duach, the most useful of Tuathal's kerne in time of war, the most sluggish in time of peace, amongst the tenants of the valley. A peillice, or hurdle dwelling, from the wicker walls of which the muddy plaster had been washed away, while the loose wolf and fox skins that formed the roof were lifted by every wind, enclosed the hooded warrior and his wife, with a brood of plump and fierce, but filthy, children. A broken palisade surrounded this abode, enclosing a stagnant pond, between which and the ever-open door-way, the place was trodden into a mass of mire by the trampling of kine and children. From the centre of the roof arose, throughout the day, a dense cloud of smoke, which blackened the branches of an aged elm that stretched its sheltering arms, as if in pity of the negligent or neglected inmates, above the shattered roof.

This man, the reader may remember, was the same to whose personal activity Elim was indebted for his first introduction to the household of the Ard-Drai, and to him now, in the zeal of her reforming energy, did Eithne direct her steps. Clad in a mantle of the bright purple of Cuailgne, with a veil brought over her head, and fastened on her bosom with a golden bodkin, she appeared, one morning, not long after her return from Rath-Aedain, before the shattered gate of the peillice. Here she paused, unwilling to wade, with her neatly-fastened brógs, through the mass of mire between her and the house. Duach, just risen from his pallet of loose rushes, on which his family yet lay huddled together, observed her hesitation, and judging what her intention was, Las-

tened with great strides across the slough. Without word or gesture of apology, he flung his long and sinewy arms around her figure, and lifting her from the earth, did not relinquish his hold until, with the same prodigious strides, he had placed her on the floor of the peillice.

"There art thou, Eithne!" he exclaimed, contemplating her with admiration and warm attachment, "there art thou, in the middle of our floor, and a comelier sight than ever ornamented it till now! I would thy father's child had a beard that I might kiss it, to show the moon and stars how I revere thee!"

The chieftain's daughter thanked him with a smile.

"And what must I do for thee now?" he said, with eagerness, wrapping his huge mantle close about his figure. "Dost thou hate the Ithians, from whom thou hast returned, and shall I fire their dwelling? or have they a lamb thou lovest, that I may drive it, as many a flock of ours was driven of late? or shall Géidé and Fiacha gather flowers for thee in the woods, or rob the hoopoe's nest, as they often did in the old Ard-Drai's days?"

"No, Duach," answered Eithne, "that time is past and gone. I often sought thee for my own sake, hitherto, but now I come for thine."

"I am sorry," said Duach, with an uneasy look (for rumour had already given him a surmise of her intention), "to see thy father's daughter bent upon so foolish a business."

"Thou wilt not find it so," said Eithne, "if thou beest as well disposed for thine own advantage as I am."

Duach shrugged his broad shoulders, and Eithne introduced the unpleasing subject of reform, by reminding him of the appearance this portion of Coom nan Druadh once presented, when her father was alive to govern its inhabitants; how changed it had become since then, and how desirable it was, that something should be

done for its improvement. To this, Duach only answered by short sentences, now looking heavily on the ground, now heaving up one shoulder and now another, and tossing his head with an appearance of hopelessness rather than dissent.

"It is true, every word of it is true," said he, "but it will never do. It is a plan that will never answer; the laziness is sunk into their hearts, and nothing but the sight of the fire and steel will drive it out. And, poor people! what wonder is it? They have labour enough in time of war without making peace itself a trouble to them."

"Give thyself no uneasiness as to what others may do, Duach," said Eithne, "but do thy own part well."

"My part!" exclaimed Duach, looking round upon her with affected surprise, "and what would Eithne have me do in the business?"

"Surely," answered Eithne, "thou dost not mean to hold thyself forth as a model among my kinsman's people?"

"I do not know," replied the kern, with a disappointed look; "surely I am always there when I am wanted."

"That may be enough for Tuathal," answered Eithne; "but not for thine own happiness."

"Happiness!" exclaimed Duach, "let Eithne be at peace; I have more happiness than I want, or deserve—happiness! What should a poor kern, like Duach, want with happiness? Good food and housing is enough for Duach."

"Thou art strangely perverse," said Eithne, "the roof is almost blown from thy dwelling, thy gateway choked with mire; thy children," she added, pointing to the little urchins who gathered round, with gaping mouths and eyes, to hear the lecture, "are destitute of hood or cota, and thou sayest thou hast enough of happiness; thou shouldst

rise day after day before the sun, and labour through every hour of his course until all this is altered."

"I do not know, Eithne," said Duach, tossing his head, "my roof I promise thee to mend as soon as the yeaning season comes, when the wolves shall be in plenty in the Coom. I should not want peltry now, either for roofing or for clothing, but for those ruffian spoilers of the Delvins, who left me not a skin besides my own, and I can hardly say they left that whole. As for the gateway, in the summer season, which is now approaching fast, it is as dry as our floor, and in the winter, if it keep a woman on the outside, are not my arms or Banba's strong enough to save her from foul brógs? and if we are not within, what need has she to cross? As for men and kine, they can wade through. My children, lazy brood!" he added, driving them away into different corners, "they want nothing but years to help their toiseach in battle, or their mother at the quern; and as for rising every day before the sun, to what purpose should I do so?"

"Thou wouldst find it both pleasanter and more profitable than sleeping late," answered Eithne.

"Daughter of Mogh Ruith," said Duach, "tell that to those who have not tried both. In troubled times, indeed, to drive a herd, or fire a hostile brugh, I understand that it is pleasant; but to rise before the sun with nothing to do but weave a sciath, or whet a rusty sparth, which can better be done at noon, when his light is broadest, that, Eithne, is jesting against reason and experience. But, Eithne, see! there's one descending the hill with Moyel close behind. If thou wouldst make *ceannuighes* of thy father's people, O'Headha will instruct thee."

Raising her eyes, Eithne beheld, in the direction pointed out by the kern, the Ithian chief, in the act of leading his hobbie down the steep. Hastily throwing down her

veil, yet not so quickly as to prevent Duach from observing, with a secret smile, the sudden blush that overspread her features, she left the cottage (being conveyed across the entrance in the same manner as before). She then hastened to the small dwelling in which she usually spent most of her time throughout the day, and where she was at liberty to receive her Christian friends.

She had entered the house before O'Headha reached the base of the mountain, from which he had first beheld the Coom nan Druadh. Folding her hands close, as if in deep emotion, she endeavoured, by a moment's recollection, to prepare for receiving the Ithian with her accustomed ease, and then remained looking out quietly on the lake, the island, and the opposite mountain. Hearing a step without, she turned, and saw O'Headha, entering with an expression of delight, though frank and undisguised, yet not unmingled with embarrassment.

"Thou seest, Eithne," he said, advancing quickly, "that I have followed thee."

"I am glad to see thee, Elim," said the daughter of Carthann, "glad to see any one from Inbhersceine."

After inquiring with a natural warmth of manner for Macha, and her newly acquired friend, Eithne was in turn assailed by the questions of O'Headha. She communicated the occurrence of the morning, with the characteristic reasoning of Duach, in defence of indolence.

"And here am I once more," she concluded, after a few minutes' conversation had restored both to their usual manner, "queen of my own domain, with nothing to do all day but lament my inability to serve my father's kerne ; and at evening to sit quiet in the Dun, to listen to the river rushing through the crag, the wind rustling through the roof-broom, and the mournful note of the old cruitiré's clairsech at the fireside, for he has not spirit to touch it since his patron died."

While she spoke, Elim had arisen and walked towards

the window, where he remained for a few moments, endeavouring to prepare himself for the trying part he was about to act, which was of too important a nature to himself and to his people, not to cause him keen anxiety. At length, after a pause of deep silence on both sides, the chieftain, with something, yet not all, of the accustomed grace and self-possession of his manner, approached the daughter of Carthann, and addressed her with a distinct, though tremulous utterance.

"Eithne," said he, "before you left Rath-Aedain, you gave me leave to hope, and yet I cannot tell you in what torture I have passed the last two weeks. I implore you Eithne, to end it by holding me no longer in suspense. You can make many happy, Eithne, by your answer. I intreat you, hear me kindly. You have the esteem of Macha, and the affections of our people ; you have Elim's ardent love."

Eithne listened, with her forehead resting on her hand, and the emotion of her mind appearing in spite of her efforts to command it.

"Do, Eithne, hear me generously," continued the chieftain with fervour—"be favourable, Eithne, I intreat thee ; consent to be our people's queen ; be Macha's daughter ; be the blessing of the life you once preserved. Or, if you know of any difficulty—" he added, observing that she delayed to reply.

"I know but of one," said Eithne, "and that lies not with me."

The rapture which Elim received from this confession was expressed with appropriate ardour. It was even some time before he called to mind that there was any qualifying clause in the favourable answer he had received.

"My father," said the daughter of Carthann, in explanation, "at his death, enjoined me never to take this step without the consent of his old patron, Niall, the Ard-righ, at present in the isle of Hy."

"From what thou hast said of Niall's character," said Elim, "I have no reason to apprehend an obstacle from him?"

"None, I believe," was Eithne's answer.

O'Headha rose, as if about to enter at once upon the journey. Turning once more, however, and looking on Eithne, with a happy smile, he said :

"This difficulty over, then, I have no more to fear from Eithne?"

At this appeal, the Druid's niece turned round in her seat, and answered in a tone of the most earnest kindness :

"Why should I hesitate, Elim, to answer thee directly? Why should I conceal from thee the happiness that thou hast given me? Be successful with Niall, and thou wilt find no difficulty in persuading Eithne to give her hand where she has already given——" she paused a moment in deep agitation, and then added, extending her hand, and smiling calmly—"her affections."

CHAPTER XXIX.

Thus prosperous, Elim lost no time in making the necessary preparations for his departure. They were few, for he resolved to make the journey without any state, taking with him only a single attendant. Committing the government once more to the care of Macha and his officers, he rode from the valley, intending to take the road to Ath Cliath,* and thence to proceed through Inismore, to the scene of Niall's exile. This route afforded him a satisfaction in the prospect it presented of enabling him to visit the Dene of Ouse, the birth-place, and perhaps once more

* Dublin.

the abode, of his school companion, Kenric. He rode along, indulging the brightest hopes for his own happiness, and the increasing glory of his country, which might, ere long, obtain for her the same rank in the political, that she already held in the literary, and, more than all, in the religious world. His speculations on the prospects of his native isle were, however, somewhat clouded by an incident which befell him on the way.

He entered, about noon, on one of the brightest days of summer, a glen of barren crag and mountain, where he found a solitary wanderer, threading his way with slow and doubtful steps amongst the rocks, which lay so thick and massy on the ground, as almost to forbid the passage of the horses. The costume of the stranger appeared so singular, that Elim would have taken him for a foreigner, but for the tone and language in which he addressed them as they overtook him. He was seated, sidewise, on the croup of a small hobbie which bent beneath the weight of two heavily laden cronnógs of forest skins.

"Cead failté, brother lunatics !" he exclaimed, in a laughing tone, as the travellers approached.

"I thank thee for thy greeting," answered Elim, "though I know not why thou shouldst call us out of our names, at the first sight."

"Nay, so think all the lunatics on earth," replied the pilgrim, "the wise man only knows himself a fool. But, craving pardon for my jest, knowest thou not that this glen is the famous Gleann na ngealt, the Paradise of lunatics, where all the madmen in the kingdom come within twenty-four hours after they lose their senses."

Elim now remembered to have heard Duach tell how the king of France, growing delirious with fear of the redoubted Oscur, at the great battle of Ventry Harbour (Fionntragha), was carried through the air, in a frightful manner, to a glen of this name. Entering into farther conversation with the stranger, he discovered that he was

one of those travelling *ceannuighes*, or merchants, who trafficked in the produce of the southern coasts, and often extended their peregrinations to Inismore, to Gaul, to the Italian states, and even to the most distant nations of the east. He was astonished to hear, from this commercial pilgrim, accounts of Chinese manners, the result of actual observation, and descriptions of those of other nations, the veracity of which he found it impossible to doubt. Always certain of acquiring useful knowledge from such persons, Elim continued to converse freely with the merchant, as they rode together through the glen. He received, amongst other pieces of intelligence, one which filled him with anxiety. The merchant related that the deepest apprehension prevailed along the continental coasts in consequence of the reappearance, in prodigious force, of those northern pirates, called, in their own language, the Vikingr, or Bay-kings, whose ferocity during former descents upon the shores of southern Europe, had given the inhabitants cause to remember them with terror. They had already, as Elim now for the first time understood, made their appearance at the isle of Rechrinn, on the northern coast of Uladh, where they landed for the purpose of plunder; and he remembered having heard old Clothra say that their sails had been descried off the western coast, immediately before his return to Rath-Aedain from Muingharid. O'Headha was sufficiently aware of the sanguinary character of this fierce people, who made war their passion, their toil, and their amusement, to feel keenly for the peace of Inisfail, which he well supposed could not long escape the search of these barbarous adventurers, and which, from internal want of union, was far from being in a condition to resist any formidable invasion. The general history of the race he knew already, and the merchant supplied him with many additional particulars of their character and manners which added force to his previous conception

of both. They were, he knew, the descendants of a race that once had made the masters of the world look pale. He had heard in his youth of the Cimbri,* who had for many years filled Rome with terror and mourning; of the bloody field of Verceil, where the baton of Marius almost extirpated their nation; of the desperate and savage ferocity of their women, who, standing on their baggage chariots, hewed down alike the pursued and the pursuing; nay, with a more than bestial obstinacy, dashed their children against the ground, and flung themselves beneath the chariot wheels of the victorious Roman. That spirit of arms which, in a better cause, might have deserved the name of valour, had not, however, perished with the luckless victims of Verceil. The fugitive remnant of their race transmitted it, undiminished in its violence, and its disregard of every restraint, whether moral, natural, or religious, to their descendants in the north. Flying to the shores of the Scaggerac and Bothnia, they fell, in the course of time, under the dominion of Sigge, a follower of Mithridates, and also a fugitive from Roman enmity. There he founded a monarchy, and, being himself a Scythian, assumed the name of Odin, who was the Scythian divinity. On the death of the sage, Mimer, who was much esteemed for wisdom, Odin had his head cut off, and pretending that he had, by his enchantments, restored to it the use of speech, the oracles of Mimer's head became, ere long, the wonder of the north; insomuch that the fame of the head, when living, was nought in comparison with that which it enjoyed when separated from the trunk. Perceiving his end to draw near, Sigge assembled his friends, and in their presence, gave himself nine wounds, in the form of a circle, with the point of a lance, and gashed his skin in various places with his sword. Dying, he declared that he was going back into

* See Note 35. The Cimbri.

Scythia, to take his seat amongst the other gods, at an eternal banquet, where he would receive, with great honour, all who should expose their lives in war. He then expired, and his body was burnt at Sigtuna. Such was the origin of Odin, of Valhalla, and of that sanguinary thirst of war by which the northern states were yet distinguished. They were taught from childhood to despise the fear of death, and they never shrink from inflicting what they themselves regarded without dismay. Valour, with them, was the only quality that deserved the name of virtue; and what, in kinder lands, was termed cruelty, to them was sport and pastime. Nor bribes, nor prayers, nor tears, were ever known to check the northmen in their thirst of blood. They scorn the soft affection that vents itself in grief for friends departed, and even the holy sorrow of repentance was to them a subject of derision and contempt. Their gods, as they believed, delighted in carnage; and in proportion to the havoc they made on earth, was their recompense to be in the heaven of Odin. They came from a land where winter held eternal sovereignty, and their tempers were as stern, as stormy, and as dark as the atmosphere that brooded on their icy hills and barren precipices. Their ears were never soothed with the sound of summer airs; their eyes were never charmed with the sight of Nature in her garb of summer bloom. They were nursed on the breast of terror, and their thoughts and actions were directed to inspire that passion in other hearts which they never suffer to disturb their own. Cold as their hills of ice, fierce as their tempests, hard and implacable as their sea-beat cliffs, and gloomy as their lowering skies, it were as well to seek mercy of the deep, when it was chafed by winter's fiercest storm, as of a northern warrior, and least of all of those who made the waves their territory, the terrible Bay-kings. This species of sovereignty, so singular in the history of mankind, originated in a species of necessity

It was the practice of their land-kings, when straitened in the power of providing kingdoms for their sons, to bestow on some of them a fleet of ships, with the title of Vikingr, or Bay-king. This fleet was manned by warriors, whose boast it was, that they had never slept beneath a roof, nor quaffed the drinking cup beside a hearth. Their common food was the undressed flesh of horses, and their draught was frequently the blood, which they drank from wild bulls' horns, and sometimes from the skulls of vanquished foes. On preparing for an expedition, they mustered on the coasts of their native land, like birds of passage gathering for flight. One was selected as a victim to propitiate their slaughter-loving god. Even their destined chief was sometimes known to sink beneath the sanguinary ox-yoke of their sacrificing priest, for their sullen deity would often turn aside from less than princely gore. Thus, with their minds prepared for carnage, they launched upon the billows of their wintry seas, and woe befel the coast on which their prows were stranded first.

Such were the reflections and the remembrances that made Elim listen with anxiety to the merchant's information. On arriving at the convent, where he remained for the night, he found, in the refectory of strangers, a company of various professions, pilgrims, merchants, and other travellers, amongst whom the principal subject of conversation was the same which had occupied his own attention on the way—the descent of the Finn Geinte on Rechrinn isle, and the devastation committed by that fearful scourge on some continental coasts. With hopes less brilliant than at morning, as to the opening prosperity of his native land, Elim retired to his chamber.

In the morning, the ceannuighe, standing on the road as Elim issued from the convent, accosted him by his family name, and said:

“I did thee a service, O’Headha, before thou couldst value it. It was I who warned Macha, at Ros Ailithir,

where they had just been giving thee a name, to be on her guard against the thanist, Baseg."

"And what acknowledgment, good friend," said Elim, "(for I confess the obligation,) dost thou look for at my hands?"

"But to heed my voice again," replied the merchant. "Thou art on thy way to Inismore, and I have good reason to bid thee beware of Baseg still."

Elim thanked him, and would have inquired farther, but the merchant bade him farewell, and turned off a different road. The young Ithian continued his journey to Ath Cliath, from whence he soon embarked for Inismore.

CHAPTER XXX.

PASSING, before Elim, into Inismore, let us return to Kenric, whom we left pursuing his adventurous journey to Cair Grant, in company with the Scandinavian book-vender. They had not travelled many days together, when the attention of the young Northumbrian was strongly excited by some peculiarities of manner in the stranger, which seemed not in harmony with his declared character. He proclaimed himself a Swede, yet he spoke Kenric's native tongue with perfect fluency; he played the harp with some skill, though in a peculiar style, and sung words in a language strange to Kenric, which he asserted to be in part his own, and partly the production of an Upsal scald, who had been for a time his tutor in the art. He declared himself a Scandinavian; and yet, as they sometimes continued their journey by night along the Gwethelin (one of the four great highways of Duuwallon), the Northumbrian observed symptoms of a passion to which it was, amongst the northmen, a capital

offence to yield, and which is looked upon, by almost all mankind, as an evidence of internal baseness.

On the eighth day, at noon, they reached the hapless Cair Dorme, ere long once more to smoke in ruins, on the banks of Nene. Passing through the town, Inguar (for so was Kenric's new companion named) invited the latter to turn aside, and rest awhile, under the shade of a small ash grove upon the brink of the river. Here, as they shared their mid-day meal, the Scandinavian made his young companion acquainted with a considerable portion of his history. It is necessary for us to detail the whole at greater length that the reader may understand the cause of those events, which, as mentioned in the last chapter, had already begun to menace the tranquillity of Inisfail. For this purpose, we must turn our eyes awhile from western Europe to a gloomier land, and a darker picture of the times to which our tale belongs.

The Finnish merchants who crossed the dreary moors of northern Sitheod, on their way to the cities of Upsal and Sigtuna, stopped often at the cottage of a man named Gothurn. The trade by which this person obtained a livelihood, for himself and an only son, was that of hunting martins, otters, and of decoying wild deer from the waste, by means of tame animals of the same species, like those of which the voyager, Oshtere, made a present to king Alfred. In addition to the toil which he found necessary to the support of both, he was obliged to furnish to the neighbouring Fylki-kongr, or Land-king, an annual subsidy of the skins of the animals they slew in the chase, together with a bear-skin cloak of his own manufacture.

Inguar endured this life of monotony and suffering with more impatience than his aged parent. In the latter, custom had in a great measure wearied out the desire of change, and he appeared contented enough with his situation, except when provoked to anger by some mark

of malice or of craft in Inguar. In other respects, he was a stern and silent man, and seldom conversed with the youth on any other subject than that of the chase, or their domestic occupations.

It happened that, one day, while his father was out with the decoy, a Finnish merchant having several horses laden with peltry and cables of whale-hide and seal-skin, stopped at the door of Gothurn, in order to procure refreshment. Inguar, who never before had seen so large a cavalcade, and hoped to receive some proportionable fee, made haste to prepare the house for the reception of the stranger and his company. He strewed fresh rushes on the ground, and spread before them venison and mead, in such abundance as the cottage could afford. The travellers proceeded to consume their meal in silence, while Inguar, retiring to a corner of the hut, continued to gaze, with wonder, on the persons and attire of all.

When the travellers had concluded their repast, each placed a liberal gift in the hand of their boy host, except one, an old grey-headed man, who said, as he patted him on the head :

“Child, I have nothing to give thee in return for thy entertainment, but if ever thou travellest to Upsal, and seekest the dwelling of the Magus, Kurner, thou wilt be welcome to as good a turn.”

Inguar, who never expected to go to Upsal, returned with a sulky look this empty-handed recompense, and stood in the doorway long after the cavalcade departed, thinking more of this man's avarice, than of the generosity of all the rest.

In some time after, the aged Gothurn, finding his end draw near, despatched his son across the moors, with intelligence of his sickness, to a relative who lived in a village near the seaside. Inguar, who had never been more than a mile or two from his father's cottage, undertook this journey with a mixture of eagerness and apprehension.

Late in the evening of the following day, he arrived at the place which had been described to him. Inquiring by name for the house of his kinsman, he was directed by a shepherd to a small hut, near the end of the village, at the door of which sat the man he sought, engaged in repairing the sides of his skin-boat with a piece of whale-hide. Ingvar advanced, and, after kissing his beard, delivered him the message with which his father had entrusted him. The man lifted his hands in wonder when he heard it.

"Oh, Ake Thor!" said he, "if this be not a strange adventure! Thirteen times has the mid-winter month returned since he left our village. And art thou the son of Gothurn?"

"Gothurn had but one child when he departed," said an old white-haired woman, who sat spinning wool near the door of the hut; "I remember the occasion well. He had been two years wedded; I know it well, for I carried one of the lights before the bride, and he lost her before the nightless month. He was sitting one night," she added, letting her distaff hang by her side, and suspending the motion of her wheel, "mending his nets upon the shore, when the Singing Neck allured his wife into the waters, where she perished. After the next day, we heard no more of Gothurn and his child." When she had said this, she twirled the wheel, and resumed the action of the distaff.

"I know not where my father came from," answered Ingvar, "but this I know, that he is dying now in the waste, where we have lived together from my childhood."

He was silent, for he perceived that a crowd of the inhabitants of the village, men and women, had gathered around, and were eyeing him from head to foot, with looks of wonder. The relative of Gothurn gave him welcome, and told him that most of the persons whom he beheld were his relations. They were subjects of the

same Land-king, and lived chiefly by fishing, except when they were tempted, by the desire of plunder, to join the Bay-kings of the Baltic, in their descents upon the coasts of Livonia and Poland. Inguar gazed with astonishment on every thing he saw; on the boats, on the children, on the household animals; and he pleased himself chiefly, during the night, in prying into every corner of the house, and asking useless questions.

In the morning all the relatives of Gothurn which the village contained, prepared to return with Inguar to the sick man's cottage. A numerous company was thus assembled on the following evening beneath the roof of their humble dwelling, and a scene of revelry commenced, such as Inguar never in his life before had witnessed. He was still further astonished, when, in a few days after their arrival, he saw his sickly parent expire beneath the knife of his relative, the fisherman, who, according to the customs of those nations, anticipated in this manner the natural stroke of death.

It was the end of the insect month, when the friends of the dead, after wrapping his body in ice, which they had the art of producing in the hottest seasons, in order to preserve it during the period of the wake, commenced the usual festivities which preceded the interment of the corpse. For nearly a month, the house was in a constant uproar with feasting on venison, drinking of mead and ale, singing, dancing, and other diversions, until all the provisions, comprising even that portion which was reserved for the Land-king's subsidy, were utterly consumed. They then laid out the body, dressed it in furs of beasts, and woollen garments, conveyed it to the place of sepulture, and buried it beneath a mound of earth, interring with it, at the same time, a portion of the owner's wealth, as the custom of the country recommended.

Inguar, who had freely entered into the enjoyment of the tribe, surprised them all by refusing the offers which

they made of permitting him to return and live with them at the village. When they were out of sight, he hastened to his father's grave, opened it, and possessing himself of the little treasure it contained, threw down the earth again upon the corpse, and returned to the cottage. Soon after, while he stood considering his situation near the cottage door, he was surprised by the arrival of the servant of the Land-king, who came as usual to collect his master's tribute. Inguar related to him what had taken place, and showed him why it was that he was unprovided with the means of satisfying his demand.

"Let that excuse you," said the emissary, "with the Fylki Kongr himself, but it is my business, without any argument, to make prisoners of all who are defective. Bind him fast," said he to his soldiers, "and bring him away."

The men, who were all attired in hauberks and leathern helmets, and armed with skiolds and brazen-headed spears, advanced and tied the youth as they were ordered. They were joined on their route by many similar companies, and Inguar heard them talk much, as they mingled their troops, of the wars between the Swedish and Nordman kings, and of the dexterity of their own Land-king in the sports and exercises which became a soldier. No one, they said, could contend with him in the use of the two-edged spada, the spear, and the battle-axe, double or single. No one kept so firm a seat on horseback—no one swam so well as he; he could make of his skiold a boat upon the waves, and a house upon the land; he could skate with the speed of an eagle; he could dart the lance, and he knew how to manage an oar with inimitable skill.

"But now," said the person who was speaking in praise of the Land-king, "the snow of the brain hangs white upon his shoulders, and his valour has descended on his son, the forest of whose head is still as black as

midnight. Praise to the young Vikingr! Praise to Gurmund! he even excels his father, I have seen him in the ship, while the rowers were plying on their benches, walk without the vessel on the moving oars, and never miss his footing. He is a wondrous prince! I have seen him keep three daggers in the air, without once wounding his fingers, a feat which no hero that our country has ever produced has, to my knowledge, exceeded."

CHAPTER XXXI.

IN the castle of this accomplished monarch, Inguar was detained a prisoner for a week. It was a building of vast extent, crowded with troops, and enclosed by a rough stone wall, called, from its numerous windings, the Dragon of the castle. In the turret, where he was confined, he found two prisoners already, who had fallen by the chance of war into the hands of the Land-king. One of these was a blue-eyed and fair-haired young man, who wore a tunic of fine linen, the collar and borders of which were curiously embroidered, and his hair, which he was continually palming and dressing, was platted to its full length behind. Over his shoulders hung a short gaudy cloak, and on his head he wore a kind of conical hat adorned with several coloured circles. He was the first to accost Inguar, using the dialect of Denkirke,* which resembled that of Inguar's native tongue. He informed the latter that he had been now for nearly thirty nights a prisoner with his brother in the place, and that he was the son of a Danish Bay-king, who, after having enriched himself by the plunder of many a southern

* Denmark.

coast, had purchased a tract of land near the Sound, and thus became a Thiod-Kongr, or Land-king. "But at his death," added Ferreis, "he caused all his riches to be buried in some secret place, in order that he might compel his sons to become pirates. His war-house, his brazen armour, his gilded helmet, and his painted skiold, he caused to be interred in his own monument. His riches I cared not for, but that beautiful helmet! If he had not been my father, I would have robbed his grave for it."

The other prisoner, a fierce and haughty looking man, addressed not a word to Inguar during the first day of his imprisonment, and often in a sullen tone reproved the levity of his younger brother, who was for ever talking, for ever shifting from place to place, now platting his hair, now changing from one foot, now another, now eyeing Inguar's dress with a look of mockery, which the latter did not forget, and smiling once or twice, as his eye rested upon a rent in his woollen tunic, or a bare patch in his skin coat, where use had worn off the fur.

He was seated one evening on the winding staircase of the turret, when Ferreis came softly behind him and said: "Ho! Inguar! art thou willing to take a leap for liberty?"

"The churl's blood has not heat enough," said the voice of Yrling, speaking from the room above.

"Hush! softly! he must try it," said Ferreis, "a dagger's point behind may spur him to it. Canst thou swim?" he added, in a whisper, to Inguar.

"Yes," answered Inguar, "I learned that in the lakes where we used to watch for otters."

"Thou hast a lake to brave at present," answered Ferreis, "that will try thy sinews, and thou never dealtest more unkindly by an otter than Harold's Nordmen will by thee, if they fish thee out of it. Keep a strong heart, for thou must battle with the ocean for a time."

Inguar, without answering, followed him up the steps,

and was conducted to one of the windows that overlooked the ocean. Here, while Ferreis was occupied in removing the grouted cement that bound the corner stones to the body of the wall, Yrling, the other prisoner, entered for the first time into lengthened conversation with Inguar. He proposed to the latter, that in case of their effecting an escape, which was very doubtful, he should, like them, take arms in the service of some Bay-king, and thus enrich himself by plunder, and make his name renowned by slaughter.

"If thou fight," said Yrling, "like a valiant warrior, fearless of death thyself, and unsparing of the blood of thine enemies; if thou die, as every freeman swears to do, with arms in thine hand, thy valour shall be well rewarded. Thou shalt sit after death in the halls of Vingolf and Valhalla, and eat thy fill of pork for ever amongst the heroes. Odin, whose delight it is to behold good blows on earth, and to see the sword of the valiant gash the body of the conquered, will reward thee in his palaces hereafter."

While he spoke thus, Ferreis reminded them that it was time to commence their operations, and they made ready accordingly. Night now had fallen, and a strong wind rushing shoreward from the ocean, made its waters chafe noisily against the base of the tower. While Ferreis removed the stones, Yrling gazed, with his arms folded, upon the lurid streaks of twilight which yet reddened the waves of the rolling gulf of Bothnia, and Inguar looked upon the waters with a secret fear which he dared not suffer to become apparent. Yrling, now placing his foot upon the window seat, and compressing his person into a small compass, suffered himself to drop headforemost from the aperture. They listened for his fall, but the height and roar of waters prevented the sound from reaching them. Ferreis then pointed to Inguar a watch-fire on a distant part of the coast, towards which

he should direct his course, and bade him follow Yrling. The latter dared not hesitate, although he felt a sudden chill when he listened to the comfortless tumult of the waves beneath him. Of the height he could not judge, for the darkness hid the ocean from his eyes. Feeling, however, the hilt of his companion's dagger on his shoulder, he suddenly raised his hands above his head, and dived stone-like into the thick gloom. The waters received him, after his long descent, deep into their bosom. He arose slowly to the air, stunned and enfeebled by the stern concussion. The breakers foamed about his head, and it was some moments before he could recover the view of the distant watch-fire. Renewing his vigour at prospect of the weary distance which lay between him and safety, he extended his person on the surface, and with difficulty reached the shore.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ON the fourth day after their escape, they were able to perceive, upon a wide and fertile plain, the mass of clustered cottages, in the midst of which the great temple of Upsal arose like an architectural mountain. They travelled by the Morasteen, a circle of enormous stones, which Ferreis pointed out to Inguar as the place in which the Swedish monarchs were inaugurated. Passing this place, a journey of half a morn brought them within the ramparts of the great metropolis of Sithead. "This is Upsal," said Yrling, deigning almost for the first time to look round upon Inguar; and the latter felt his heart beat within him at a word of which he had heard so much. His companions, observing the wonder with which he gazed on everything that he beheld, interested themselves with some kindness in making known to him

the different objects that seemed to fix his attention. "Yonder," said Yrling, "is the dwelling of the currier who prepares leather for the coats and helmets of the warriors." "And opposite to him," said Ferreis, "dwells the worthiest weaver of woollen stuff in all Sitheod." "That fire," said Yrling, "which thou seest yonder on the far bank of the Sala, comes from the forge of Biger, the king's armourer." "And there," said Ferreis, "farther still along the bank, thou mayest discern the abode of the king's tailor." "Yonder," said Yrling, "arise the towers of the royal residence of Sitheod ; and here," he added, "is the temple of the Supercilious."

Inguar stopt to gaze upon the gigantic edifice. The houses which they had hitherto passed, were, for the most part, such as they continue to the present day, simple buildings of wood, with roofs of turf. But now he stood to contemplate a building of a magnitude that was to him marvellous. A grove of broad-stemmed oaks surrounded a circular edifice, considerably higher than the spreading tops of the trees. A deep shade was thus cast upon the building, which seemed fashioned chiefly of wood, but impressing a feeling of awe on the imagination by its great magnitude. Around the open door the Magi appeared, some passing in and out, and others seated in the shadow of the porch.

While Ferreis went to make their arrival known to their patron at the palace, Yrling bade the young Swede accompany him into the building. They arrived before the door of the temple, and were about to enter. "A Danish follower of Jarl Torquetil," said Yrling, addressing one of the Magi, who seemed inclined to oppose his entrance, "desirous to return thanks to Odin for safe deliverance from bondage, and the disgrace of a dungeon." The minister gave way, and he entered, making Inguar follow close behind him.

The Swede, bewildered by the sudden splendour with

which he found himself surrounded, placed for a moment his hands upon his eyes, and remained lost in admiration. After a pause, he ventured to look around him, and contemplate the stupendous and magnificent interior with a steadier eye. It was an oval building, vast in circumference, and deeply gilded all around, so as to resemble one enormous pile of gold. A solid chain of the same precious metal, nearly a thousand ells in length, ran around the roof; and below, at the opposite side of the building, appeared the door, which conducted to the inner temple, or the place of sacrifice. The roof was carved into sculptured images of the different idol-deities of Scandinavia; and around the building were ten recesses, in each of which was contained the statue of an idol. There smiled the beautiful Balder, the lovely son of Odin, upon whose columns verses were engraved, which had the power of restoring the dead to life. Here frowned the fierce Niord, lord of the elements, whose task it was to govern the winds, the waters, and the up-bursting fire. Here stood the warlike Tyr, the giver of success in battle, and the model of the brave. Here sat the solemn Brage, whose thoughts were ever wise, and whose words were ever eloquent and flowing, the prince of poetry and the patron of the scalds. There, too, appeared the watchful Heimdall, of the golden teeth, the sentinel of Heaven; the sightless Hoder; the silent Vidar, whose strength almost equalled that of Thor himself, and whose magic shoes enabled him to tread on air and ocean, with a foot as firm as on the solid earth; Vali, the hero and the archer; and Uller, balanced on his flying skates, and holding aloft in his hand the bow, whose feathered message he could make so fatal. Completing the circle of the building, and again conducting the beholder to the smiling Balder, appeared his son Torsete, the peacemaker, a neglected god, whose task it was to reunite the broken friendships of men, and of the deities themselves.

Looking up, at Yrling's bidding, to the sculptured roof, the young Swede discerned the gigantic forms of the principal goddesses of the Scandinavian idolatry. Here Saga sat in her lofty dwelling of Suarbeck; there Eira, goddess of the art of healing, seemed stooping to cull simples at her feet; and standing near, close veiled, appeared the figure of Gefione, goddess of chastity, a virtue ranking high in the morals of the north. Seated in a chariot drawn by cats, he next beheld the celebrated Freya, so highly honoured in Sitheod, whose beauty surpassed that of all but Frigga herself, and whose dwelling was in the paradise called Folvanga. She was here represented following the track of the faithless Oder, and weeping tears of gold upon the nations as she passed. Siofna, who inspired, and Lofna, who re-animated, the passion of love; Vara, the avenger of broken vows; Vora, goddess of curiosity and penetration; Synia, the portress of Valhalla; and Lyna, the guardian of those whom Frigga had delivered from danger, here also had their effigies. Neither above nor below, however, could Ingvar discover those of the three great deities of war, Odin, Thor, and Frigga, which were preserved, as Yrling told him, in an inner chamber of the temple, esteemed more sacred than this in which they stood.

Turning his eyes to the centre of the roof, Ingvar next beheld the sculptured city of the gods, overshadowed by the towering ash, called Ydrasil, beneath whose boughs the deities were supposed to assemble for the purposes of justice. At the foot of the tree appeared the three Scandinavian destinies, Unda, Verdandi, and Skulda (the Past, the Present, and the Future), drawing water from the Fountain of Time past, which bubbled at its roots, and in whose waves it was believed the Spirits of Wisdom and of Prudence lay concealed. With this water they bedewed the ash, and kept it ever green. The drops, descending from its leaves, fell to the earth, and formed, it

was said, the honey which the bees extracted from the flowers. The topmost branches of the ash were concealed amid the clouds, its boughs seemed spread over all the earth, and its three roots extended, one through the city of the gods, and another to the Forest of Iron, on a distant part of the roof, where dwelt the sorcerers of the north, together with their giant brood, the monster Managarmr, who fed upon the flesh of the dying, and those two wolves who howled for ever in the track of the sun and of the moon. One of the Magi, observing the attention with which Inguar contemplated the hideous monsters of the Iron Forest, gravely informed him, that only a few days before, Managarmr and the wolves had made a vigorous attempt to swallow up the sun at noon day. They so far succeeded, that his light was considerably diminished, and but for the terrific uproar made by the inhabitants of Upsal, there was little doubt, he said, that it would have been extinguished altogether. Following with his eye the course of the third root, Inguar traced it through what was meant to represent the surface of the earth, as far down as the nine worlds of Hella, where it was gnawed by the serpent called Nidhoger. Here, likewise, the artist had exerted his skill on a more terrible subject. The nine great gates of the dreadful prison-house appeared from wall to wall, opposite the northern extremity of the ceiling. Half painted and half sculptured in the wood, the horrors of the place were plainly visible. There rained the poisoned showers through a thousand springs, and embedded in the horrid walls appeared the mangled carcasses of serpents, which supplied materials for the hideous masonry. A winged dragon, blacker than the night, was seen hovering in a circle above the multitude of those who were sentenced to the Evil Home, and preparing to make its accustomed banquet on the bodies of the impious, and those who died of age or of disease. Here, seated on her gloomy throne, appeared

Hella, the daughter of the giantess Angerhode, and the dreadful sovereign of the place; whose hall was Grief, whose table was Famine, whose knife was Hunger, whose servants were Delay and Slackness, whose gate was Precipice, whose porch, Faintness, whose couch, Pain and Sickness, and whose tent was Cursing and Howling. Not the least hideous object of the whole was the ghastly figure of the queen herself, the Scandinavian death, half coloured blue and half the hue of living flesh. With a gathered brow and lips apart with fear, Inguar contemplated the terrors of this place of punishment, so wildly, yet so strikingly embodied in the language of Edda and Voluspa.

At this moment, Yrling beckoned him to where he stood. "Observe," said he, pointing upward to the ceiling, "that courteous figure which seems to move, amid the divine assembly, with so much grace and dignity. That is Snotra, the goddess of good manners; there too, are Jord, and Rinda, the wife of Odin; and behind, with feet prepared for active movement, and looking back like one who waits for some command, is Gna, the messenger of Frigga. The group of virgins, whom thou seest with goblets in their hands, and robes that hang so light about their forms, are the Valkyries whom Odin sends into the battle to mark out the victors, and those who shall be slain. The two, who pass before, are Gudar and Rostra, chief of the Valkyries, and around are the thousand spirits of the elements and all the planets. But on what is thine eye fixed with so eager an attention?"

"Seest thou not," said Inguar, "that eagle with outspread wings, who sits upon the topmost branch of the mighty tree, and whose eye, bent downward, seems to regard the shape of the squirrel, which appears ascending rapidly amid the branches? What are those figures, and what is their interpretation?"

"Thou inquierest," answered the Dane, "into a mystery

concerning which thou canst learn nothing of me. All I can tell thee is that the bird is a bird of astonishing sagacity, and that the squirrel continually hastens up and down the tree between its top, which is above the heavens, and its third root, which penetrates the depths of Hella. His pleasure is to sow discord between the Eagle and the serpent Nidhoger, whose fangs are busy on its root. This shall continue till the twilight of the gods shall come, when Loke the Accuser shall be unchained; when his monstrous offspring, the wolf Fenris, shall open those tremendous jaws which touch the heavens and the earth, and would extend farther if there were space sufficient; when Surtur, the great black, shall annihilate the gods themselves, darting flame and horror over all the earth, and reducing all things human and divine to one terrific wreck. Wo to the earth! Wo to the heavens! Wo to the race of Aske and of Embla, when Loke shall be set free!"

"And thus," said Inguar, fearfully, "thus is it that all things shall terminate?"

"Not for eternity," replied the Dane, "else wherefore should Odin be adored as the father of ages? Out of the hideous mass shall arise a new world, more lovely than the present, a new heaven called Gimle, a palace more splendid than the sun, and with a roof of gold, and a new hell, Nastrande, the shore of the dead, which shall remain for ever."

Inguar was silent, and remained for some time pondering on what he had heard, half satisfied, half anxious still to be informed, like one who has drank beyond moderation of an intoxicating beverage, and wavers between forbearance and desire. He walked slowly around the temple as the level and yellow sun sent lengthened streams of light across the solemn interior, now striking on the form of a gigantic idol, and now reflected with a dazzling splendour from the golden wall.

After they had spent a sufficient time in admiring the place, Ferreis, returning from the palace, entered the temple, and informed his brother that the Jari had, since their captivity, embraced the life of a Vikingr, and was now absent on an expedition to the coasts of Poland. They were, however, well remembered at the castle of the king, his father, and their reception there was certain to be favourable. Inguar cast on them an imploring look, as they turned to bid him farewell.

"And are you going to leave me," he said, "a stranger, friendless and fortuneless in this great city?"

"Strangers ourselves," answered Yrling, "friendless and fortuneless we entered Upsal, and by our own exertions we hewed out our way to fortune and to friends. Thou art young and strong, and the city is large. We could be of little use to thee, and thou wouldst but encumber us."

"Be of good heart," said Ferreis, perceiving Inguar droop at these words; "thou hast a handsome frame, and if thou wouldst but learn to plat thine hair, and obtain a comelier attire, there is no telling how high thy condition yet may reach."

They departed, and Inguar, passing out of the temple, went to lean against the lofty oaks, where he wept bitterly.

In this situation he did not continue long unobserved. One of the Magi, who was pacing up and down before the porch, and eyeing him askance, while he perused the Runic tablets which he carried in his hand, at length drew nearer, and accosted him in a voice which Inguar thought he recognized. On looking up, he had no difficulty in remembering the countenance of Kurner, the old man who had treated him so ill at his father's cottage.

When he had made himself known to the Magus, the latter interrupted him with a gesture of assent—"I know thee well," said he, "and remember well the promise

which I made thee. What service canst thou render me in case I feel inclined to take thee into my employment?"

"I can decoy the wild deer from the waste," answered Ingvar, readily, "and know how to lay traps for martins. I am skilled also in the hunting of otters, and have sometimes even brought the brown bear low with the javelin. In fishing, also—"

"I fear," interrupted Kurner, with a smile, "thou wilt find little scope for the use of thy talents in Upsal, and still less in the service of a Magus. But follow me," he added, "thou art a promising youth, and I may find employment for thee till thou canst meet a better master."

Ingvar followed him through a number of wooden cottages, scattered irregularly along the banks of the Sala, and at length arrived at a small house little superior to those which were inhabited by the ordinary citizens. At a little distance beyond it were the suburbs of the city, which, as Ingvar could perceive, were inhabited by people of the very lowest rank, dwelling some in miserable huts, others under the shelter of ditches, hollowed out to receive them, and some had even taken up their abode in the clefts of the rocks which overhung the river side. The interior of Kurner's dwelling was plain, and not the cleanliest in Upsal. A thick, heavy post, arising from the centre of the floor, supported the turfen roof, and the furniture consisted of a table and two stools. Along the walls were many wooden shelves, on which were placed a great number of Runic tablets, such as that which Ingvar had seen him reading, and which were composed of ash, of birchwood, or of the inner bark of trees. The Magus set forth the table, and placing on it some horse flesh, with a brazen cup of ale for Ingvar, and another of more delicious pigment for himself, bade the latter sit and eat, a command which Ingvar readily obeyed.

After their repast had been concluded, the latter, at the desire of Kurner, gave him a detailed and candid nar-

rative of his late adventures, reserving to himself those circumstances only which immediately followed the burial of his father. For some time after he continued in the service of the Magus, his chief employments being to attend on the person of his master, to bear his robes and tablets to the temple on days of solemn service, and to prepare for him the draught of pigment, which he loved; a delicious beverage, composed of the sweetest honey that Eastland sent to the city, of wine from the southern coasts, and of stimulating spices. Inguar longed to make farther inquiries respecting the mysteries of the temple, but the Magus was studious and reserved in his habits, and not a little dirty, so that Inguar, finding his employments at the same time incessant and monotonous, became almost as weary of them as he had ever been of hunting deer upon his native moor.

This tediousness was relieved by a discovery which he made in the course of a month. He had long observed that the sides of the table, the stools, and even the head and foot of the bed or couch in which his master slept at night, were covered with figures, and a little examination enabled him to perceive that they were the same with those which were written on the bark and ashen tablets used by the Magus. This led him to many conjectures on the mystery of reading, but supposing that some supernatural gift was requisite for that accomplishment, he refrained from questioning Kurner, while his veneration for his character increased. The latter frequently detected him in the act of poring over the inscriptions, and sometimes imitating them with black slate on the walls and pillars of the house. This circumstance awakened his interest, and he kindly afforded to Inguar the opportunity of acquiring the knowledge for which he seemed to have so keen a thirst. After he had, by the exercise of a capacity, whose vigour astonished his master, rendered himself somewhat proficient in the interpretation of the

Runes, he ventured to intimate to Kurner, the desire which he felt of being initiated into the depths of the sanguinary mythology of his nation. The latter looked grave and even sad at the request, but promised to take an early occasion of leading him to the interior of the temple, and explaining to him those mystical emblems, respecting which Yrling the Dane had left him still in ignorance.

One day while Ingvar was employed in cooking their simple meal of flad-brod, or oaten-bread, and horse-flesh, a sudden tumult was heard in the streets of Upsal. Immediately after, a loud shout arose, mingled with the clashing of shields and spears, like those sounds of applause which the people used at the assemblies of the judges. It was answered as he could observe in the direction of the river.

"The Vikingr!" was the first word which he could distinguish in the general acclamation; "The Vikingr! Torquetil, the Vikingr!"

Joining the crowds who hurried past the door of Kurner's house, Ingvar soon beheld a sight that was to him as grand as it was new. The river was darkened at a distance by a fleet of vessels of various sizes, some with sails expanded and swelling in the wind, others darting along with oars as light and nimble as the fins of a dolphin. As they approached the land, it was easy by its size and splendour to distinguish the bark of the Bay-king. It was a vessel of pinewood, manned by rowers and warriors, among whom appeared the Jarl Torquetil himself, remarkable above the rest by the size of his person, and by the painted emblems on his skiold. While Ingvar stood contemplating the spectacle, he felt a hand upon his shoulder, and the voice of Kurner sounded in his ear:

"Ingvar," said he, "does thy curiosity still hold respecting the secrets of the temple?"

Ingvar eagerly replied in the affirmative.

"Then follow me," said the Magus, "and when we have despatched our noontide meal thou shalt be satisfied."

The youth observed, during their repast, that the eyes of Kurner were often fixed upon him with a mournful expression. When it was concluded, he arose, and bidding Inguar follow him, proceeded in the direction of the temple.

Arrived at the place, they remained for some time silent, while the broad shield of day sunk slowly and with a solemn splendour behind the shining roofs of the city. The moon, as she went down, put on a deeper gold, and the stars came faintly forth, to twinkle in the darkening air. By degrees, the number of passers by the temple became fewer, the murmur of the city diminished, and no sound disturbed the solemn stillness of the hour, except the distant ringing of some armourer's anvil, or the plash of passing oars upon the breezy Sala. Sitting at the porch of the temple, and fixing his eyes upon the heavens, Kurner resumed his speech. He instructed Inguar, now, without reserve, in all the mystic records which were contained in the Runic tablets of the Magi. He taught him, how in the beginning, before the sun arose, or the earth was yet a being, a brood of giants dwelt in the Forest of Iron; he told him of the wars between those giants and the gods; he taught him how the sons of Bor, overcoming the giant Rymer, formed from his lifeless frame the world in which they dwelt. The earth, he said, they fashioned of his flesh, the mountains of his bones, the sea and rivers of his blood, and of his teeth and the splinters of those bones which they had broken, they formed the scattered rocks that make the midnight horrid. The skull, he said, they shaped into this glorious vault of heaven, and the stars which twinkle now above their heads, were the tapers which they hung within the dome to give it light; he taught him likewise, how the

human race began ; how the slayers of Rymer, walking on the shore, found floating on the ocean surge two logs of wood, of which they formed the first man, Aske, and Embla, his spouse. He described to him the car of Sunna, composed from the flames of the southern world, and the skins of air which were placed beneath the horses of the shining Mane, to cool their blood, and to make the morning winds. He placed before him in sounding words the many glorious dwellings of the gods whose images he beheld around him ; he told him of the accuser Loke, and of his wars against the deities ; how he was seized, and bound, and doomed to dwell in torture upon three sharp rocks until the twilight of the gods, when the ship Naglefara, composed of dead men's nails, and piloted by the giant Rymer, should be set afloat ; how the Accuser howled and writhed beneath the dripping venom of the serpent which the vengeance of Odin had suspended above his head ; how his convulsions frequently shook down the cities and the towers of earth ; and how since those fierce wars the watchful Heimdall was left in charge of the celestial fort ; the White god, whose teeth are of the purest gold, who sleeps by night less soundly than a bird, whose sight embraces by day a circle of a hundred leagues around him, whose ear is so fine that he can hear the grass grow on the earth, and the wool on the sheep's back, and who bears in his hand an alarum trumpet, the blast of which is heard from heaven to earth, and even to the depths of Hella.

As he concluded, Kurner bent upon the youth that mournful gaze which had so often excited his curiosity. "I would," said he, "that this were all I had to tell thee of the mysteries of Odin's creed, but thou hast secrets yet more horrible to learn, for which it were as well to prepare thee beforehand. The chamber to which thou art about to be admitted is the place of sacrifice, where oft, though seldom mentioned in the common ear, the altars

of the three chief deities are stained with the gore of human offerings."

Inguar observed the Magus shudder as he spoke these words, and he started himself at the announcement, though fearful of suffering Kurner to observe his horror. The latter, however, did not seem displeased at the passing sign of natural sensibility.

"Thither," said he, "we cannot penetrate, until the temple is deserted, and the Runner has retired to take his nightly rest. Wrap thyself in this bearskin, and follow me once more into the building. Thou shalt rest upon the bench within until the Frosty Mane* gleams from the mid-heaven, and the priestess only is left, who keeps watch beside the altar of Odin."

The night had now completely fallen, and as they passed the doorway, they heard within the temple only the echoing footstep of one of the Magi, returning to his home until the morning. Inguar followed his master to the bench of which he had spoken, and rolling the bearskin close around his person, reclined at length, while the Magus, proceeding onward, disappeared in the darkness.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SLEEP surprised him in the attitude of rest. His brain was haunted by dreams of the things which had been told to him, and his visions changed rapidly and frequently from the most glorious to the most appalling fancies. Now borne by the goat-drawn car of Oka Thor, he flew through the portals of Biskerner, his celestial palace, and wandered in amaze amid the five hundred and forty

* The Moon.

gorgeous halls into which it was divided. Now he aimed the arrows of the son of Rinda, now darted along with dizzy speed upon the skates of Uller, now hung upon the music which flowed from the lips of Brage, and now with glowing breast he swung the ponderous battle-axe of Tyr. Then borne in the Flying Shoes of Vidar, he scaled the many-coloured bridge, Befrost,* and almost stole upon the sleeping sentinel of Heaven. Then did he see the watchful Heimdall, startled by his sounding footstep on the Rainbow, awake in haste, and snatching his terrific trumpet, blow out a blast that shook the universe. Then, flying far, he passed the stormy region of Noatun, and beheld its monarch Niord, chastising the rebellious winds and the tempestuous ocean. Again his vision changed, and he found himself hurrying downward to the nine gloomy worlds of Hella. He saw the Accuser Loke, of handsome figure and perfidious eye, bound on three pointed rocks, and howling beneath the poison-spume of the serpent who wound his giant circle with untiring wings above the region of the dead. There fell the venom showers upon those who had died basely of disease or age, and here through the thick gloom he heard the fearful complaints of the despairing vicious.

In the midst of these terrors, the Magus came to awaken his disciple. It was now dark midnight, and the gloom in the temple was so dense that Inguar was tempted for some moments to believe his vision real. Recovering his recollection, he arose and followed his master, who, after having secured the gate of the building, proceeded across the interior to the door of the inner recess. The darkness was so great that Inguar could only follow the Magus by the sound of his feet. On arriving at the inner door, Kurner paused and knocked gently with one finger slightly bent.

* The rainbow.

The door was thrown open by an aged priestess, and a sudden burst of light shone out upon the pair, and struck far behind them into the temple. They entered quickly, and the door was closed again. The priestess, gathering, with a proud action, and a sullen scowl at Inguar, her flowing robes around her, moved slowly towards the fire which burned within, while Inguar gazed around with a gloomy and a troubled awe. On an altar of great extent, which was raised on the opposite side, he beheld the three gigantic idols of the supreme deities, whose places, as he had heard Yrling say, were missing in the outer temple. The discourse of Kurner had enabled him to recognise by their attributes the names of each. The throne and sword, together with his massive armour, announced the first as the warlike Odin, worshipped here as the Father of Battles. On his left stood Thor, the Active, crowned with a diadem of stars, encircled with his belt of strength, and grasping in either iron gauntlet his sceptre and the club Thiolner, terror of the giants. Again, upon the left of Thor, he beheld the lofty Frigga, holding in the one hand a sword, and in the other a bow. Around this altar was an open space, and on the opposite side arose a second, lesser in size, and plated with sheets of iron. From this ascended a flame of the perpetual fire, and near it stood the wrinkled priestess, still and motionless as a statue. Upon the altar lay a brazen vase, and near it a brush, used in sprinkling the blood of the victims on the bye-standers, together with several broken masses of flint. Beneath these there hung a ponderous silver ring, which was smeared with something that, to Inguar's eye, appeared like clotted gore. The strong flame ascending toward the roof, flung all around it an unequal splendour, and lit the features and the figures of the armed idols with a changeful and uncertain brightness. It shone likewise upon the curtained recess which led to the chamber of the priestess, to the apartment of Heida, the

prophetess, and the abode of the great Oracle, which, as Inguar had often heard, excelled all those in Nordland, in Denkirk, and even in Dalia. It gleamed, moreover, on the withered form and haughty features of the priestess, who, by her scornful gaze and high deportment, seemed to esteem herself scarce less divine than the idols which she served.

After a sufficient time had been allowed to render the eyes of Inguar familiar with the wondrous sights by which he was surrounded, they departed from the temple, and with thoughtful steps pursued their way in silence through the midnight streets, until they reached the dwelling of the Magus.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

For several days after, the Magus appeared absorbed in the deepest dejection, nor did Inguar venture to address him upon former subjects, although his breast was oppressed with thoughts and feelings which he longed to utter. At length the health of Kurner began to yield to his depression, and he was unable to attend his customary duties at the temple. Inguar prepared, as usual, his beverage of pigment, and served him with an assiduity sincere, at least, if not disinterested. He found means, moreover, to pursue his study of the Runic characters, and was, ere long, almost accomplished in the art. So great was his proficiency, that Kurner, while he was himself disabled by sickness, employed him in tracing runes for those who came to consult him on their destinies, and to employ his magic influence in their favour. As Kurner enjoyed no slender reputation in the city, the number of those applications was not small. The Magus had his runes to suit the character of every inquirer. There were

victorious runes to give the warrior confidence, and bitter runes to avenge the injured on his foe. There were also runes for the sick and runes for desponding lovers; runes for the evil-minded; runes for the melancholy; runes for those who set out upon a journey; and runes for those who sought prosperity at home by quiet traffic. There was no species of ill so terrible, no good so desirable, that the one might not be won, and the other averted by Kurner's mystic scrolls. Nor did their efficacy diminish when the Magus was constrained to employ the hand of Inguar in their fabrication, nor was the number of applicants diminished. The characters inscribed in every case were nearly similar, but Inguar knew how to vary the material, and the mode of writing, according to the necessities of each. Sometimes they were inscribed from right to left, sometimes from top to bottom; sometimes they described a circle, and sometimes the letters ran counter to the course of the sun. Some were written on polished pieces of ash, some on the bark of birch, some on the leaves of trees, and some on parchment. He acquired, moreover, at this time, some knowledge of the imperfect astronomy of the northerns; he spent much time at night, wrapped in his comfortable bearskin, and heedless of the freezing air, in observing the movements of the Great Dog; that wondrous star that never bathes its light in the waves of ocean, and by means of which the piratical Vikingr was enabled to extend his rapacious excursions to the distant shores of Livonia, and even through the dangerous Scaggerac, as far as the fertile regions of the south. The thirst of knowledge grew upon him as he proceeded, and he longed to share in the adventures of the Bay-kings.

The disease of Kurner, which at first seemed only the effect of mental sorrow, assumed, by slow degrees, a dangerous character. His bodily strength became exhausted, his flesh decreased, and his whole frame exhibited the signs of an irretrievable decay. As his vigour diminish

ed, his conversation also lost its active character. It was now almost confined to questions which regarded their daily traffic, to expressions of discontent at the manner in which his food was prepared, and to complaints of Inguar's indifference in discharging the other duties of the lonely household.

Towards the close of a mid-winter night, while Inguar was sleeping on a bed of rushes at the foot of the narrow wooden couch on which his master lay, he was awakened by the voice of the latter. He arose with speed, and hastened to the side of the bed. Kurner was sitting up, and supporting his back against the lettered board which formed the bed's head.

"Inguar," said he, after a long silence, and in a voice no longer querulous, "thou must shortly seek another master. Thy services to me will be ended sooner than thou art aware."

The youth, terrified, uttered a hasty expression of dissent.

"My kinsmen," continued the Magus, "will divide my goods, of which thou knowest there is but a scanty portion, and thou wilt be left bare as when I met thee first. Thou hast acquired, however, an inward treasure, which if thou beest wise, will save thee from the extreme of penury. The dreadful Hella, the parti-coloured queen, has struck the springs of life within my breast, and I feel them yielding even while I speak. Now let me die in silence."

A short time elapsed before another word was spoken. It was Kurner who broke the silence.

"I have long observed," he said, after bending on the young Swede a gaze already haggard with the approach of death, "that thou dost not share the iron spirit of our countrymen. I saw thee shudder in the place of sacrifice when thine eye first fell upon the gory armilla, and I could also see that the descriptions of the sanguinary

pastimes of Valhalla afforded thee but little satisfaction. It is therefore, Inguar, I am led to speak to thee without reserve, and to warn thee of the dangers by which thou art encompassed. If thou wouldst shun the torture of remorseful recollections, the living Hella of the heart, avoid the service of the gods of Upsal. Thou seest these aged hands. From my early childhood was I devoted in their temple, and yet not custom's self can make my soul contented when I think of the horrors which these hands have wrought within that temple in the dreadful name of Odin. I do not agree with some impious Nordmen who openly declare that they rely much more upon the strength of their own arms than on the aid of any deity, nor with the insolent Rolf of Denkirke, who called the Father of Battles a blustering spirit, and refused him sacrifice, nor yet with certain licentious scalds, who dared to utter the same sentiments in public places, heedless of the anger of the gods, and of the laws, which doom such impious speakers to perpetual exile. I do not agree with them in thoughts so foolish, because there is that within our breasts, and all around us, which plainly says that we are under the dominion of some great directing deity, and their denial sprung from pride alone; pride of valour in the warrior, and pride of genius in the scald. But of this, I am equally assured, that if truth exist on earth, it is not in the service of the slaughter-loving gods of Upsal. At least, young friend, be very sure of this; there is no peace of heart for him who serves their temple."

Inguar listened in silence, and with deep attention, but made no reply. Soon after the weakness of the Magus seemed increasing. He turned with an effort on his seat, and extended his arms toward the astonished Swede.

"Assist me, Inguar," he said, "to pass into the air, that I may look upon the heavens before I die."

"Thou hast not strength sufficient," replied Inguar, anxiously, "and the night is piercing cold."

"It is not colder," rejoined the Magus, "than these limbs will be before the day returns. My strength is little, but it is fit I use it, for it will not long be left me."

The young man aided him in rising, and did not withdraw his support till he had placed him on a seat without the dwelling. The night was calm, and stilly cold, like death. From his seat the eyes of the expiring Magus could discern the frozen surface of the Sala, and the distant plains and leafless forests of Sitheod. The sky was starlit and serene, and the broad, full moon descended slowly down the distant steep of heaven. The Magus, as he gazed upon the car of Mane, seemed, by the expression of his eyes, to be absorbed in the deepest contemplation.

"Whither I go, Inguar," said he, "I know not, but I will not, like my countrymen, hasten to begin the doubtful journey by offering violence to the work of the divinity within my frame. I have never learned," he said, lifting his hands and eyes to heaven, "what God it was who formed those glorious stars and that beautiful moon; but to him, whoever he be, I recommend my spirit."

Saying these words, the Magus sunk down, and expired upon his seat.

CHAPTER XXXV.

HE had truly judged that Inguar would meet little kindness from his kinsmen. To the astonishment of all, no trace could be discovered of the wealth which Kurner was supposed to have amassed. Nothing could exceed the industry of the search which was made by the friends of the deceased; but it was a fruitless labour, and the infer-

ence only remained, that it had been destroyed or secreted by its possessor for some unaccountable reason. Some of them were so malicious as to insinuate that his young scribe must have had some hand in its abduction, and this suggestion brought on Inguar a load of abuse and violence. They railed at him in the most bitter and offensive terms, and stripped him of everything except his clothing and his book of runes, which latter they left him, only through fear of the spirits, who were bound, as they believed, to obey its mystic characters. They then divided the spoils of the dead among them, and thrusting Inguar from the door, recommended him to be grateful for having retained his life after his delinquency.

Crafty as he was cautious, Inguar had still less doubt than his kinsmen respecting the property which Kurner left. He was aware of the existence of that diseased instinct, to which even minds of the highest tone are not inaccessible, by which men are led to gather and secrete vast sums of wealth, with no other object than the mere indulgence of the detestable passion which we are forbid to name; and which frequently induces them, with an unaccountable selfishness, to bury with themselves the knowledge of their useless riches. The young Swede also knew that the dupes who came to be enlightened by the Magus on their future history, compounded for their own fortunes by making his. He had often observed the satisfaction which the latter seemed to enjoy in these profits, with how careful a nicety he weighed the silver, depositing each portion in his purse, after long and pleased inspection; for none, perhaps, are more apt, when not most watchful against indolence, to fall into sordid habits, both of body and mind, than the studious and the solitary. These reflections led Inguar to examine a small garden, to which he was aware the Magus often retired at the close of day. But the morbid ingenuity of the old man's only passion, had enabled him to baffle all attempts

at discovery, and Inguar left the place in disappointment.

Approaching a little valley near the house, he saw, beneath the shelter of a rock, a man in the habit of a scald, walking to and fro in the greatest perplexity, and repeating aloud some lines of a droquet, or song, of the peculiar prosody of which the following veracious translation may furnish some idea :

“Fiercer far than furious war,
Rough as ruffled rivers,
Carried in thy crashing car,
Quick-eyed maid of quivers.”

“Quick-eyed maid? No!” continued the bard, in prose, and shaking his head! “Quick-eyed lady! No; Quick-eyed—quick-eyed—quick-eyed. What will be come of me? I shall never do it. Quick-eyed—”

Inguar, who knew just enough of the poetry of the scalds, to see the nature of the bard’s dilemma, said aloud, after standing some time, amused with the display of poetic agony:

“Quick-eyed queen of quivers.”

The scald started as if Brage himself, the Scandinavian Apollo, had descended to assist his labours. He flew to Inguar, clasping him around the neck, and discovering that he was but a human being in want of employment, at once received him into his own service. Here he remained for some time, his chief occupation being that of listening to the poet’s high encomiums on himself, and his equally liberal abuse of every other scald in Upsal. These were interspersed with occasional strictures on the degeneracy of public taste, and the difficulties true merit had to contend with in its way to public favour. This easy life continued until his new master discovered that

Inguar had, in point of fact, little ear either for poetry or music, and that the timely succour he had lent, in the droquet or ode to Frigga, was more the effect of accident, than genius or skill. On making this discovery, he made no ceremony whatever of turning the young Swede out of his house as an impostor.

Once more without a friend, Inguar went down alone to the banks of the Sala, to meditate on what he should do. The river, in some places, was covered from bank to bank with a solid crust of ice, and many of the citizens were passing from one shore to the other, as over a bridge. Inguar passed over with the rest, and arrived at the forge of the king's armourer, which had been pointed out to him by Yrling the Dane, on the morning of his first entry into Upsal. The ringing of the hammer attracted his attention, and looking in, he saw, by the light of the furnace, the figure of his old acquaintance Ferreis. He was standing near the anvil, and examining, with a gratified eye, the shining blade of the weapon, the scabbard of which was already suspended to his side. It seemed by the countenance of the workman, who, with brawny arms folded athwart his chest, looked alternately from the weapon to the eyes of his customer, that it was a new purchase, of which the latter was admiring the beauty and completeness.

"I will have it inscribed with the handsomest Runic," said Ferreis, enclosing it at length within the scabbard, "and I will give it a double name. Inasmuch as it is keen, it shall be called Destroyer, and whereas it is beautiful, it shall be termed Dazzler. Destroyer it shall be, when it shines in the bath of blood upon the billows of the ocean, and it shall be Dazzler, when it hangs peacefully by my side, at the evening festival."

Bidding the armourer farewell, and coming forth, he recognised Inguar, and accosted him with kindness. The latter made known to him his desolate condition, and

Ferreis proffered his assistance to get him introduced into the service of the Jarl Torquetil. Inguar accepted with thanks the proffer of the Dane, and followed him upon the instant to the place where the fleet of the Vikingr, for the most part locked in ice, were stationed. Upon the shore, and in many parts of the frozen river, the vigorous and large-boned troops of the Bay-king were engaged in martial exercises. Some wheeled and darted on the rapid skates, some flung the spear, some sent the arrow whistling at the painted target. Some, in mock combat, brandished the spada and the halberd; and a few, of the rank of leaders, were seen gracefully fencing with the lighter *sword*, such as Ferreis had purchased from the armourer, which resembled in its curve the sabre of the East. They found the Jarl standing near his ship, out of which he had never closed an eye since he embraced the kingdom of the seas. He readily agreed to the request of Ferreis, after he had learned from the lips of Inguar himself, that he could not only catch martins and otters, but also trace the runes in every direction, and declare at what times the goddess Frigga made her distaff * visible beneath the Road of Winter. †

Different, from this time, was the life of Inguar from what it had been in the house of the mild Kurner, and different were the habits and tempers of his new companions. A warrior professed, it now became his duty to acquire a warrior's vigor and a warrior's dexterity. His moods of silent thought gave place to habits of sharp and rapid converse; his boyish limbs were made to anticipate the firmness of maturity; and his soft and tender flesh acquired the hardness and the strength which were needful for the dealing and avoiding death. He was taught to move in armour, to cover his person with the skiold, to cast the spear, to use the grappling iron, to

* The three stars in Orion's belt.

† The Milky Way.

skate, to ride, to do all, in short, that constituted in northern eyes the outward merit of an accomplished warrior. As to the interior, his companions excelled him at an almost hopeless length. At first, indeed, he listened to their narratives, for he longed to add something to the knowledge which he had obtained from Kurner, but none of Torquetil's followers had ever passed the Sound, and their victims were commonly of customs somewhat similar to their own. From the moment he became satisfied of this, Inguar avoided rather than sought the intimacy of the sea-people; and he became more weary of the mechanical and objectless round of corporeal exercises, which were now his sole employment, than he had ever been of the silent monotony of the household of his late master. Still more weary did he become of the character of the people. Pride, excessive even to absurdity, sensuality of the coarsest order, and an unsparing cruelty of heart, were vices that seemed to brood over the city like its own dark northern atmosphere.

Bloodshed was common, although the country was at peace, for scarcely a day went by on which some insult was not given and avenged in single combat. There was in the conduct of these duels, as in all the warlike etiquette of the northmen, a species of extravagant and barbarian honour, the spirit of which, not a thousand years of what is called improvement, have banished from the bosom of the world to which they left it.

Of this singular principle, Inguar witnessed a remarkable example within a few months after entering the service of Torquetil.

Yrling, the Dane, in an altercation with a warrior of equal rank, having undergone the epithet of "Nothing" (a term equivalent to poltroon), struck the insulter, and challenged him to make good his charge upon the spot. A space was cleared upon the ice where the taunt was given, and Yrling succeeded in overthrowing and disarm-

ing his opponent; in doing so, however, he lost his own weapon. The "honorable code" of the day rendered it imperative on the person so insulted to be satisfied with nothing less than the death of his antagonist. Yrling, aware of this, placed his knee upon his enemy's breast, and endeavoured, with a savage calmness, that made Inguar shudder, to strangle him to death. The vanquished Swede, abhorring this bloodless agony, besought him to fetch his sword, and pledged himself to wait his return without changing his position. To the astonishment of Inguar, Yrling at once consented; and, still more to his surprise, the vanquished kept his word, although he might have easily, by its violation, recovered his own weapon and renewed the combat. The Dane returned and wiped away his shame with the blood of his unresisting foe. The warriors who were present lifted him on their shoulders as they were wont to do their newly-elected kings, and bore him to his ship in triumph. The Vikingr, when he heard it, gave him leave to add a new honor to his skiold, and a sounding droquet was composed for the occasion by an eminent scald. Meantime the body of the Swede was buried under a mound of earth upon the shore.

Such were the progenitors of European honour; such were the haughty fathers of the duei; whose spirit, descending to the nations which they half subdued, deluged France with blood, and gave birth to scenes which rivalled the gladiatorial shows of ethnic Rome in extent and in barbarity.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

WITH the return of spring, the day of Odin's yearly festival approached. Inguar was anxious for its arrival only because it was intended to precede, by a few days, the

sailing of the Vikingr's fleet on a piratical excursion to the south of southern Europe. The waters of the Sala were now again unlocked, and the armed barks tossed their prows upon its wave, like war-steeds tugging at the bridle and impatient for the charge. During the few days which ushered in the festival, the ways of the city became crowded with new comers. New fleets of the small trading ships arrived in the river, laden with the choicest skins, and with store of fish, from the Baltic; and the market-place was crowded with yokes of oxen, lowing lonesomely beneath their burthens of honey and fish, from the plains and lakes of Estland. The noise of hammering, and the voices of artificers busily at work, were heard daily within the temple, and all mouths were filled with talk of the approaching day of sacrifice.

Upon the morning of the festival, Inguar took his place among others near the temple porch. As far as the eye could reach, in the direction of the royal castle of Upsal, the streets were thronged with the artisans of the city, the country shepherds, known by their bended staves, the skin-clad merchants from the interior, and the isle of Aland, and the sharp-eyed mariners who traded between the Baltic and the Gulf of Bothnia. A passage was preserved through the midst, in order to afford room for the procession, which was expected shortly to approach. The mind of Inguar reverted, while he waited the coming of the barbarous pomp, to the warning speech of the compassionate Magus.

After some hours of tedious expectation, and many false alarms and disappointments, the sound of distant music made the arrival of the pageant certain. Heads were thrust out along the eager line, and a murmur, as of a hoarse torrent, arose from the people, when the gleaming lances of the first horsemen came in view. They were a troop of iron-fisted Swedes, whose thick-limbed and broad-breasted steeds made the stones shoot

fire wherever they set their hoofs. In the midst of these appeared a species of four-wheeled chariot, the body consisting merely of a coloured cloth suspended between four gilded posts, in which were seated the Runner, the Adelrunner, the Diar, and the Hofgodar of the temple. Then followed the scalds, on foot, some singing songs of praise, in which Odin was celebrated under all his terror-striking epithets, while others accompanied the strain with the sound of the tabor and the trumpet, the rapid pipe and flute, the citola, the cymbal, the systum and the campanula. The next in order were the victims of the sacrifice, guarded by two lines of foot-soldiers armed in the pliant hauberk, with helms of tough bull-hide, and one-edged battle-axes. Twelve horses, of deep and shining black, whose backs had never bent to human servitude, were led in front, rearing fiercely at the unaccustomed restraint, and striving to paw down the servants of the temple by whom they were conducted to their death. In gentler fashion, and lowing mournfully for their native meadows, appeared six yoke of oxen, snowy white, and garlanded with the few wild flowers that blossomed in those dreary plains. Next came as many dogs, of the fierce and sagacious breed which was used to chase the bear, led on in couples, some with up-pointed snout, sending forth a doleful howl into the heavens, and others as they run along busily snuffing the earth, or looking from side to side with active and inquiring face. The line of victims was closed by a score of falcons from the cliffs of Bothnia, each borne on the hand of a slave, an offering almost too precious even for the altar of Odin himself. Behind the row of victims, standing in a simple car, of which the sides and wheelspokes were richly carved and gilded, appeared the aged King of Sitheod. Over a snow-white tunic, curiously gathered on the breast, and embroidered around the edges, he wore a purple cloak, which was fastened on the right shoulder by a clasp

of gold. A long grey beard descended so as to hide a portion of his breastplate, and his hoary hair was pressed close and straight upon his temples by the massive golden crown. In his hand he held a capacious censer of the same metal, and his feet were covered with the pointed shoe, which was worn by all classes. He was followed by his son Torquetil, the Bay-king, on horseback, accompanied by many of his captains, among whom Ferreis, and his brother Yrling, rode at no great distance from his person. The procession was closed by a numerous troop of horsemen, armed like those by whom it was preceded, with the addition only of a ponderous mallet, a singular weapon, borrowed from the Saxons, which was suspended from the saddles. The armed retinue, which accompanied the procession, and followed the royal car, could not, on Inguar's computation, have fallen short of five thousand warriors, equipped from head to foot. When the grey-haired monarch came within view of the multitudes who were assembled around the temple, their acclamations drowned the minstrelsy of the scalds, the trampling of the thousands of horsemen, and the lowing of the cattle. The soldiers clashed their swords and spears against their skiolds, and added a brazen tumult to the general peal of ecstasy.

As Inguar yet was member of no guild or society of warriors, he could not be admitted to the place of sacrifice, and he forbore to enter the temple, as it would not be in his power to be present at the ceremony. Ere long, however, an opportunity was afforded him of meriting the honour, for the want of which he was excluded. Walking thoughtfully along the streets, and pausing only at intervals, to admire some novelty of dress or figure amid the groups of strangers who thronged the city, he stopped, at length, before the open gateway of the royal palace. It was a building somewhat like that of the Fylki-Kongr, to which he had been taken from Gothurn's cottage, and

like it was built upon a rocky elevation, with a deep and well-filled moat; but its extent was much more considerable, and the armed troops, by which it was defended, far exceeded in number and equipments those of the tributary sovereigns. While he stood gazing on the gloomy towers, and listening to the distant dim of the idolators, his ear was startled by cries of terror, and a rushing of hurried feet upon his right. Almost at the same instant an armed figure came hurrying down the steep which led from the postern to the drawbridge, and darted by the drabants, who shrunk aside, all weaponed as they were, as if they had been struck with fear. The guards who surrounded the gateway leading to the drawbridge, seemed also panic-struck, and made way in haste, as if for something sacred. The multitude without fled, huddling together, in all directions, as the waters of a lake into which some ponderous mass has been suddenly precipitated. Inguar alone, who knew not the nature of the evil from which they fled, remained without changing his position to gaze upon the furious warrior. The latter stopped, at length, in the centre of the open space before the castle, and, sending forth, from the depth of his lungs, a broken howl, resembling the cry of a rabid dog, abandoned himself to a paroxysm of delirious rage. He rent from his shoulders the cloak which was his principal covering, whirled his naked spada above, behind, and before him, with a rapidity that made its gleaming reflection alone visible in the air, and sometimes gnawed the edges of his iron skiold, growling deeply, and casting threatening looks from side to side, like a jealous mastiff at his bone.

After the first effect of the panic occasioned by his appearance had subsided, the people turned to gaze upon the maniac (for such he appeared). Amid the clamour of a thousand tongues, the yelping of dogs, the screaming and laughter of children, the shrill conflict of women's

voices, and the hoarse and hurried questions of the men, Inguar was able to gather some sentences with distinctness. "It is the Berserkir," said one. "Take him or hew him down!" exclaimed a soldier, grasping the handle of his battle-axe. "No, no!" cried a third, seizing the arm of the doubtful warrior, "let him alone, for it is the spirit of Odin that fills him." "It is against the law," said a fourth, "that those phrensies should be indulged out of the battle." Thus were the crowd divided in their minds, and none, not even the warriors, dared to attack a being who was supposed by many to be inspired by Odin himself, with the zeal of havoc which appeared in his looks and actions.

At length a cry arose of "Torquetil! Torquetil! Behold the Jarl! the Vikingr!" and a war-horse charged with the burden of the renowned warrior came like a whirlwind from the temple. Reining up his steed when he came in sight of the infuriated soldier, he shook his spear with a menacing air, and shouted aloud:

"What now, Bascai? How comes it that you have lost all fear of the decree of the chiefs, by which these humours are forbidden out of war? Lay down your spada, or by the shoulder of my horse, and by the edge of my sword, I'll make you do it."

The Berserkir answered him by a renewed yell of insane ferocity. He continued to brandish his weapon, with a violence so heedless that it grazed the neck of the Vikingr's steed, and drew forth a stream of crimson over the shining black. The animal neighed with anger, and reared so suddenly upon its hinder feet, as almost to unfix the seat of the practised horseman on its back. The soldiers, now forgetting their superstition in the indignation they felt at beholding the insult offered to their chief, rushed all with one accord upon the Berserkir, and sought to drag him living or dead within the castle walls. But this was not a feat to be accomplished without bloodshed.

The savage recusant, throwing his broad skiold before him, rushed fearlessly upon the armed throng, and broke the line of his assailants with an irresistible and crushing vigour. His limbs, disencumbered of the weight of mail, gave him an advantage over the harnessed figures that encompassed him; and his strength and nimbleness, aided by the preternatural excitation of his phrensy, made his presence fatal to several of his assailants. Dismay went with him wherever he turned, and the clamorous press had scarcely closed behind him, when the terror of his aspect, and his gory spada, made his foes recoil in front. For several minutes the popular belief, which supposed that persons so affected were invulnerable, seemed to be almost justified. But nature could not long administer to a demand so excessive. The Berserkir weakened. He ceased to utter the terrific yell, with which at first he had made the streets re-echo. He drew his breath with sobs, and his blows rang harmless on the scales of the helmet, or failed to divide the iron-bound skiold as they were wont. His depression augmented as rapidly as the excitement by which it had been preceded, and he was able to offer but a faint resistance, when Inguar, who could be bold upon occasion, seeing his weakness, and watching his opportunity, sprung within his skiold, and twined his arms with all his youthful force around the thick and shaggy neck of the barbarian. Both came together to the ground, amid the shouts of the multitude. At the same instant a blow from the battle-axe of Yrling struck the steaming weapon from the grasp of the Berserkir. The latter, unable to disengage himself, or to wound his enemy, made an effort to fold him with the hollow of his skiold, and crush him to death against the earth. But the people now closed in, and rescued the young soldier from his grasp. The Berserkir they bore into the castle. Others, without much ceremony, removed the bodies of the slain; while several of the people gathered around

Inguar to offer their assistance and congratulations. A currier, as he wiped with his leathern apron the soil of the combat from the person of the latter, said he knew how it would end, for the valour of these Berserkir was like undressed peltry, that showed well at first, but wore badly. "They make bad soldiers, as thou sayest, truly," observed a warrior, who was wiping his helmet close at hand, "for the strength which they show at the onset never fails to desert them at the second charge. Thou hast seen a stripling too mighty for such a moving tower as Bascai." "Who is the stripling?" asked a third. "Look again?" said a fourth, "rememberest thou not the face of him who wrote the runes during the sickness of Kurner Magus?" "Be silent," cried a fifth, "and make way for the Vikingr."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

TORQUETIL approached, and having discovered that the victor was the young man whom he had a few months before received into his service, inquired of Yrling whether he was yet a member of any guild. Being answered in the negative he commanded Inguar to follow him to the temple.

It was now high noon, and a cold sunshine lighted the scene of the festivity. Several fires were made in the streets, which led to the porch of the sacred edifice, at which were seen the artisans of the city, and many of the Vikingr's troops, employed in cooking the flesh of the victims, which was distributed to the multitude, and in passing round the intoxicating cup of Odin. Following his sovereign into the temple, Inguar was surprised to see the wide area crowded with people, who were

seated at tables, and occupied like the multitude without, in making merry with the cheer which had been already divided to them from the sacrifice. The clamour here was prodigious, for many were already intoxicated, angry voices were mingled with the sounds of mirth, and at intervals a pair of warriors might be seen rising from table with haughty looks, and issuing from the building accompanied by a few of their companions to decide some difference in single combat. It seldom happened that more than one of the parties returned, and when he did, the absence of his antagonist seemed to make little alteration in the cheer of the assembly. At the entrance of the place of sacrifice, Inguar was commanded to stand still, while the Vikingr proceeded in order to procure him admission from the chief priest. He remained listening to the noise which now prevailed in the temple, and gazing on the savage faces which were half obscured by the vapour of the steaming feast on the golden walls, and on the visages of the ten idols, down which the condensed mists ran trickling like a warrior's sweat. He looked on in a musing posture, and thought of the lonely evening on which the Magus had led him into the still and solemn edifice, and impressed his mind with the awful wonders of the triple universe. The advice of the Magus, also, in his dying moments, he did not forget.

In a short time, the two young Danes came to conduct him into the place of sacrifice. Its appearance now was somewhat different from what it had been when he saw it at midnight, under the guidance of Kurner. Three virgins appeared together by the fire of Odin. The space before the altar of the three great idols was covered with vessels of brass and stone, which were filled with blood, and before the iron-plated altar, on the opposite side, stood the chief priest of Odin, a hoary man, with two of the inferior ministers. Torquetil, together with Yrling, Ferreis, and other members of their

guild, stood near the entrance to witness the approaching ceremony. At a sign given by the aged Runner, Inguar was commanded to come forward and stand, all armed as he was, in the space before the altar, on which the eternal fire was burning. The Runner then taking in his hand the brush which lay upon the altar, and wetting the hairs in one of the bloody vases, sprinkled it upon the persons of the youth and of the bye-standers, and rubbed it over the silver armilla which hung from the altar of iron. With his right hand ungauntleted, and grasping the gory ring, Inguar then repeated the form of the oath, by which he became a member of the guild to which the Danes belonged. He swore to be true to his brotherhood, to defend their lives while they retained them, to avenge their deaths when they should fall, and never to lay down his own arms but with his life. The laws of the guild were then recited before him, by which he was prohibited from ever declining the combat with a single adversary, and from seeking safety by flight from less than five opponents. Inguar, with head erect, listened to the rule of the society in silence; and then, after washing his bloody hand, accompanied his brethren to their place in the festival.

In passing the royal table, he saw, more nearly than when he had beheld him in the procession, the grey-haired monarch, who was seated with the twelve judges of the city, drinking large draughts of mare's milk and pigment. Inguar took his place next to Ferreis, at the table of Torquetil, and after quenching his thirst, rendered ardent by his late encounter, with a horn of morat, began to observe the proceedings of those by whom he was surrounded. At several tables the warriors were noisily occupied at dice, and other games, and Inguar was astonished to observe the self-restraint and forced equanimity which the gamblers manifested, while they often staked their liberty, and even their very lives, upon a throw. A clear space

had been made before the royal table for the dancers, who, at certain intervals, accompanied by the music of the lyre and cymbal, excited the admiration of the assembly by their surprising agility, and the difficult postures which they knew how to exhibit. Sometimes a warrior chose to assist in these performances, and won the tumultuous applause of the spectators by his dexterity in twirling a number of balls and daggers in the air together, without damage to his fingers. In this respect Ferreis obtained high distinction for himself and for his favourite Dazzler, but not without having a corresponding mortification to encounter. Returning on tiptoe to the table, full of self-approbation, and delighted with the plaudits by which he was followed, he happened to mistake the place of Jarl Anslaff, one of the Torquetil's captains, for his own. The mistake was scarcely made, when Anslaff, who had been speaking to one of the scalds, returned, and chafed indignantly to find his place usurped. Ferreis was in the act of adjusting the belt of Dazzler, with a smile of self-complacency, when a drabant approached at the command of the Vikingr, and conducted him to the lowest seat at the table, amid the gibes and laughter of his companions in arms. They did not proceed to the length of throwing bones at him, as the curial law of King Canute afterwards permitted, but his mortification without it was abundant. "O haughty Odin!" exclaimed his brother Yrling, in a low voice, as he gazed upon him with a look of indignant shame, "it is pitiful that so worthy a heart, and so honourable a mind, should be doomed to the ignominy of so contemptible a folly."

As the early twilight fell, torches were lighted in the temple, and the glaring lustre which they threw over the scene of festivity gave a gloomier character to the licentious and riotous debauch. The songs and music of the scalds were, to the mind of Inguar, the most agreeable features in the distorted joy of the meeting, and to those

unmusical as he was, he listened with a still attention. Their poetry had the same air of gloomy exaggeration and wildness of imagery which had impressed his imagination so deeply in hearing the wonders of their mythology from the lips of the Magus. They celebrated the praises of the aged king, and of his ancestors. They sung also of the feats of Torquetil, upon the field of Pirates, for so they termed the ocean. They compared him standing on his ocean horse, to the giant Rymer, piloting the ship Naglefara, amid the wreck of the vessel that floats upon the Ages, and added much more than Inguar could at all comprehend. One droquet in particular attracted universal admiration, by the grandeur of its imagery, and the exactness of its prosody. It would be difficult to convey to the reader's mind an idea of the singular metre in which it was clothed, but the following was the tenour of the thoughts :

What darkness is this on the blood of Poland's valleys?
Why is the shining mane obscured, and the Car of Sunna
arrested in the skull of Ymer?

Fly! fly! ye men of the shore!

They are the steeds of the waves, they are the skates of the
Bay-king!

Fly to the extreme of the foundation of the Air!

Let the daughter of night conceal you beneath her bones,

For the hailstones of the helmets are above your heads,

And the sweat of the earth will shortly be turned into blood.

Know ye not Torquetil? Fear ye not the torch of his face?

His dreadful presence makes the crash of arms more fatal,

His hand was never yet withheld from bloodshed,

His heart is ignorant of the feeling of forgiveness,

The groans of the dying, the shrieks of the despairing mother

The wail of the young infant, turn him not aside.

Wherever he treads the very earth is robbed of her fleece,

And the naked coasts he leaves after him confess his power.

He is subtler than Loke, he is stronger than the whole brood
of giants,

And I doubt whether Thor himself would be able to resist his
prowess.

A tumult of applause from the assembly declared their admiration of the minstrel's skill, and of the character which formed his subject. Torquetil accorded him a pair of brazen gauntlets in testimony of the gratification which he had received, although Inguar found an impossibility in comprehending more than half of the composition. From this he was relieved by Ferreis, who, with a characteristic levity, had now forgotten his disgrace, and resumed his former position by the side of his new companion in arms. He explained to him the meaning of the terms by which he had been perplexed; and placed in his hands a Runic treatise on the art of poetry, which had been written by one of the scalds, for the dull of brain amongst his brother minstrels, and their auditors. This, Ferreis said, they should peruse together more at leisure, but in the mean time, he made him observe that it contained likewise a catalogue explanatory of the mystical imagery which had bewildered Inguar. "Thou observest," said the Dane, "with what expansion of soul he terms the rivers of Poland, the blood of her valleys, and the sweat of the earth; with what fire and spirit he compares the ships of Torquetil to sea-horses, and calls them the skates of the pirates; with how noble an elevation of mind he terms earth the foundation of the air, and bids her hide the unhappy fugitives beneath the rocks, which he likens to her bones. To give a just notion of the devastation which attends the presence of the Vikingr, he says boldly, that his presence robs the very earth of the green herbage, which is her fleece, and he concludes the eulogy by verging in the zeal of his commendation upon the borders of impiety." Ferreis then proceeded to expatiate upon the metrical beauties of the composition, and bade Inguar remark, that every verse comprehended exactly six syllables, that in every two verses three words commenced with the same letter, and that in every verse two syllables occurred of the same

sound, like the returning stroke of the cymbal in a concert of the scalds. He was proceeding to explain the difference between the perfection and the imperfection of this syllabic harmony when the voice of a second minstrel interrupted him. The accent of Nordland was upon his tongue, and to the astonishment of those who heard him, instead of emulating his predecessor upon the theme which he had chosen, he sung the praises of a rival sovereign, the King of Nordland, and of his son, Gurmund, whom Ingvar remembered to have heard spoken of by the troops of the Land-king, in whose castle he had been a prisoner. The latter, in an especial manner, was the subject of his applause, and he described, in terms more simple than his predecessor, but yet with no less effect, the lovely country which he had beheld in his excursions to the south, and of which he intended shortly to possess himself. "Those," he said, "who had always spent their lives under a chilling northern sky, could form no adequate notion of that delicious region. Not even the heaven of Gimle, not even the palace of the golden roof, could afford a greater variety of joy. It was an island beauteous as it was remote. It lay far off among the beams of the setting sun. Its shores were clothed with trees of an ever-moving verdure; its air was bland and temperate, as if it had never been broken by the cry of war; the soil was fruitful, and the halls of Blitner were not serener than its inland groves. Eternal sunshine dwelt upon its hills, and eternal music sounded in its valleys, for scarce a finger there but was familiar with the harp-strings. But the people were not worthy of their climate. Though fond of action, and not contemptible in war, yet they were not ashamed to consider peace a blessing; and the men were often there as tender of heart, as the youngest mothers of the north. They wept for their buried friends; they wept at the sight of suffering in others, and they were often observed to weep, even

for the offences themselves in secret had committed against heaven. With a race so weak of heart, how could the arms of Gurmund fail to be successful? He would come upon them like the thunder from the womb of the black north, like the river of spring, leaping down from the dissolving hills of snow, like the ruin upbursting through the earth, when the Accuser Loke is writhing in the Evil Home. Their sunshine he would darken; their music he would turn into shrieking; he would give them cause for tears, and he would share amongst his stern-hearted followers the delights which he had sought so far, and won so dearly."

There was no one to reward the singer of the Nordman's praise, and soon afterwards, the king arose to return to his castle, and Torquetil to his ship, in which his example was followed by many of his troops, including Inguar, who now strictly obeyed that rule of a Vikingr's life, which forbade his ever sleeping under a roof, or drinking by a hearth on shore.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE same riotous mirth which filled the temple and the streets of Upsal on the day of the festival, and during the whole night, continued with little intermission until the time arrived for the sailing of the Vikingr's fleet. The days were spent in coarse intemperance, and during the night the passing torches shone on groups of noisy men, intoxicated by strong drink, or by the rage of quarrel and contest; on the bodies of those whom drunkenness had overthrown, and not unfrequently on some who had fallen victims to a long cherished revenge, or to a sudden enmity.

The place appointed for the naval sacrifice, intended to propitiate the gods at their departure, was near the Morasteen, or stone circle which had attracted the attention of Inguar on the morning when he first entered Upsal. The day was not so auspicious as that which had ushered in the festival of Odin, and the hopes of the sea-people were obscured by many gloomy omens. A shower of blood, it was said, had turned the snow to crimson on the housetops, and the Raven on the banner of the Vikingr's ship was observed to droop its wings. These, and other similar auguries, made it appear expedient to propitiate the offended gods by a sacrifice of a more precious kind than that with which the day of Odin had been celebrated.

A council was held at the Morasteen early in the morning, before the sacrifice commenced. It consisted of the aged King, of Torquetil, of twelve judges, and of the assembly of the people, most of whom attended in arms. Here the necessity of the contemplated expedition was discussed, the increasing wants of the people were insisted on, and the shameful life of peace which they had now been leading since the mouth of short days.

Whenever any of the speakers gave utterance to a sentiment favourable to war, the people manifested their approbation by loud shouts, by the clashing of their lances, and the striking together of their mighty skiolds. The expediency of war having been assented to by acclamation, the next question to be considered was the choice of a leader, and "Torquetil" was the name which resounded in every mouth. The election having been completed, a space was opened at the entrance of the Morasteen, in order to admit the captains of the fleet, who, according to custom, were to convey the Vikingr on their shoulders to the place of sacrifice.

The temple appointed for the rite was a subterranean

crypt, within a short distance of the Morasteen. In the midst of an aged oak wood a mound arose which seemed partly artificial and partly natural, indented with circular ridges to its summit, and covered with the few wild flowers which the season and the climate allowed to put forth their tender bloom upon the air. The base was surrounded by great unhewn uprights, like those of the stone circle, and one larger than the rest appeared upon the summit. On one side appeared an opening, into which those only were permitted to enter whose presence was necessary to the progress of the ceremony, and the orifice was so low that they were compelled to creep in upon their knees. As the moment of sacrifice drew nigh, the demeanour of the multitude who thronged the wood and the neighbouring plain was altered, and to the mind of Inguar the whole scene had something in gloomy accordance with the fearful rites which were about to be performed. A dead calm lay upon the breast of nature, and the dark vapours gathered overhead from all parts of the horizon, like spirits of evil assembled to brood over the festival of hell. Not a leaf was stirred upon the old oak wood, and no other noise was made by the assembled people than the unavoidable sound arising from the concourse of so vast a multitude. All waited with suppressed anxiety the appearance of the Magus, who was to announce to them the acceptance of the unnatural offering. At length a gory figure was seen to issue from the mouth of the crypt, and all eyes were eagerly turned upon the face of the officiating minister. Dismay, however, was the consequence of what he said. He came to announce to them the unabated anger of the gods. The three victims had died successively beneath the blow of the fatal ox-yoke, but in every one of them the current of the heart was still as frozen water. The gods, he said, were only to be appeased by the blood of some member of their own troop, and the guild in which

Inguar had been lately enrolled was commanded to prepare for the casting of lots.

Some heard this with shuddering, but it was only momentary. The greater number felt more troubled in mind at the gloom which brooded over their war prospects, than at the individual violence by which the life of each was menaced. The members of the guild entered the orifice of the crypt in silence, and Inguar had now an opportunity, which even the fear of death did not prevent his using, of bestowing an eager scrutiny on the appearance of the place and of its inmates. After passing a long gallery, which rather became narrower than otherwise, as they advanced, he found himself in a kind of cavern having eight sides, and vaulted in above by large flat stones. Three recesses in the cavern, opposite to the entrance, contained as many roughly hewn images of the same idols which Inguar had seen in the place of sacrifice at Upsal. An altar was raised in the midst, before which the victims of the gloomy superstition of the north lay, cold and ghastly, by the empty vessels of stone. The vault, together with its hideous group of figures, both living and dead, both natural and imitative, was only lighted by the now mouldering fire, which burned in the centre of the altar. The members of the guild stood all erect, and motionless as iron, while the Magus, after shaking together the lots in a helmet, drew forth the name of him who was to be the victim. It was that of Yrling the Dane.

There was deep silence for some moments after the name had been announced, and then the conduct of the spectators was such as it might have been if Yrling had been suddenly called to the enjoyment of some great distinction. They viewed him with looks of admiration, as one predestined to the plains of Ida, and pressed around him with expressions of esteem and admiration. Yrling had formed to himself exalted visions of the renown and

power which he should acquire in the ensuing expedition, and there was nothing which he less expected than this fatal interruption to his career of fame. Not even, however, for an instant, did the suddenness of the change affect his look or his deportment. He neither appeared more ardent nor less firm. The same stern and gloomy energy of mind which governed all his conduct, made itself strongly manifest at this moment also, and not even his brother's eye could detect in his gesture or accent, the slightest testimony that nature had gained anything within his breast. A haughty curl was on his lip; and his look, as he laid aside his helmet, seemed to rest with scorn upon whatever it beheld. His only words, as he submitted himself to his fate, were addressed to his executioner:

"Thou wilt have fulfilled," said he, "all that I desire in death, when thou hast provided that no bondsman shall be permitted to lay his hand upon my corpse, and that no hired scald shall sing my death-song. That duty may best be done by my brother Ferreis, for it is he who best can tell my deeds."

One day, soon after that of the sacrifice, while all the warriors were busily occupied in mending old armcur, polishing shields, brightening rusty spadas, and making other warlike preparations, Inguar was thus accosted by the now lonely Ferreis:

"Inguar, hast thou as yet selected a foster-brother in the guild?"

Inguar answered in the negative, for he knew no one with whom he wished to form a connection so lasting and intimate.

"Be mine, then," said the Dane. "The Vikingr is bent on directing his prow beyond the Sound, and even across the stormy Categat, into the great ocean that flows towards the setting sun. My brother Yrling is at the banquet of the gods, and I have not a friend whom I

would trust so far as thyself. Let us make this compact, and preserve it."

Inguar gave a ready consent, and Ferreis immediately applied to one of the magi to receive their vows. The latter acquiesced, and digging a clod of earth, bade them follow him into the temple. They stood before the recess which contained the image of the warlike Tyr, and here, at the desire of the priest, the left arms of both were made bare as far as the elbow. Their weapons were next unsheathed, and Ferreis, making an incision in his flesh with a small dagger, handed the bloody weapon to his friend to imitate his example. The blood of both was received by the Magus into the same silver cup, and the spada of Inguar and the shining sword of Ferreis were smeared with the mingled gore. Dividing the earthen clod, and placing a portion on the head of each, the Magus then heard them vow an everlasting friendship, and swear by the edge of the bloody weapons at their feet, that the death of one should not pass unrevengeed by his survivor. Their weapons then were cleansed and returned to the scabbard; the wounds of both were staunched, and the foster-brothers returned together to the ship of the Vikingr

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE morning came, and the fleet went swiftly down the Sala, leaving behind them along the shores almost the whole population of Upsal and its neighborhood, who had assembled to cheer them with a loud farewell. Before sunset, the billows of the Baltic rocked their barbed prows, and Inguar, as he took his turn at the oar, looked back to his native country, over which the shades of

night were now descending. As he felt the mighty ocean heave beneath, it seemed to him as if the great element were a docile creature appointed to bear him to the accomplishment of new and great adventures. It was now, while the sun went down behind the cold hills of Sitheod, and the fleet of the Vikingr cut its way rapidly over the almost breathless waters, that Ferreis first attempted to fulfil his brother's parting wishes. The Jarl Torquetil, whose eye was fixed on Inguar at the oar, looked quickly round on hearing the first burst of the death-song, for it seemed to him like a new presage of evil, in addition to those which had preceded their departure. He did not, however, attempt to interrupt the strain, to which, by degrees, the whole fleet became attentive. The rushing sound of prows against the coming wave was gradually diminished to a peaceful ripple, the dipping of the measured oars became more gentle, and at length the voice of the orphan minstrel was the only sound which the great armament sent over the quiet waters. Like all the extemporaneous compositions of the northern poets, it was much more simple than those which were the offspring of art and reflection.

THE QUIDA OF YRLING, THE DANE.

"O shores of Sitheod! O hills of Sitheod, so distant and so cold! I sing to you a farewell song; the death-song of Yrling, the death-song of my brother, who died in your land.

"Thou, Odin, knowest how his spirit rose in the battle. Thou, Ake Thor, canst tell what strength was in his arm. He stood as a god on earth, and it was fit that for the gods he should be slain.

"His shield was white when he left Denkirke, and painted with a thousand honours, now it is buried in his

grave. He slept beneath it in the wars; he swam upon it in the strife at sea; it covered him in the battle; he rests upon it in his tomb, for Yrling was a warrior.

"When last we left Sitheod his sword was the keenest in the fleet of the Bay-king. It is rusting now in darkness by his side, and his arm is not less cold. Never again shall Yrling scatter terror on the coasts; never again shall he fill his bark with spoil. The gayest attire and the richest ornaments were the accustomed harvest of his battle-axe.

"I now go forth alone, though Yrling was my brother. We were twinned together; together we were taught the arts of war; we left our home together; together we fought, together we were captives; together we escaped; we always lived together, but together we did not die.

"Shades of the departed brave! Heroes of Valhalla! He whom you envied while on earth, is now again your rival on the plains of Ida. Receive him, O Vingolf, in your sounding halls! Attend him with the sparkling mead, ye Valkyries, for he served you well in the battle.

"Cold hills of Sitheod, I leave you now alone, and without sorrow, except for the bones of Yrling. Dance, nor fight, nor feast, nor noisy havoc shall ever now be pleasing to my heart, for the weapons of Yrling shall never more drink blood."

There was something in the voice and manner of Ferreis, while he sung, which would have raised him in the opinion of his foster-brother, but that his esteem was qualified by an unseasonable outbreak of the habitual foible of the Dane. In a few days after, when they meditated a descent upon the shores of Rugen, in order to increase their supply of provisions, Inguar heard his friend lament that his purple cloak was ruined on the morning when he crept into the gallery of the gloomy crypt which adjoined the Morasteen. "It was not accident, then," thought Inguar, "that made him class the

plunder of apparel amongst the virtues of his brother Yrling."

The descent was made, and the sword of Inguar for the first time tasted blood. So brief, however, and so ineffectual was the resistance offered, that the circumstance would hardly deserve mention, were it not for an incident which drew on Inguar the attention of his brother-pirates.

Five of the sea-warriors, among whom were the two foster-brothers, set together upon a single islander, allured by a pair of curiously ornamented boots, the spoil of a Saxon conquest, which graced his sinewy ankles. The limbs which bore them were nimble, and at sight of the hopeless odds their owner turned and fled. After pursuing him a little way into the interior, three of the pursuers gave up the chase, and it was continued only by Ferreis and Inguar; by the former for love of the boots, by the latter for love of his foster-brother. Thrice was the javelin of Inguar raised to cut short the islander's retreat, and as often did the virgin weapon drop harmless by his side. Often had it made the target ring at Upsal, but never before had its brazen point drank blood. At length, Ferreis closed upon the islander. The latter, seeing Inguar at a distance, and trusting in his superior strength, no longer refused the combat. He turned upon the Dane, and dealt with his battle-axe a blow upon his skiold, that made its iron scales ring loudly, and brought Ferreis staggering on his knee. Before the blow could be renewed, and before Destroyer could avenge the insult, the weapon of Inguar came hissing through the air, and pierced the brain of the stranger. Ferreis began to strip the unhappy islander of his dress and arms, not by any means omitting the boots, which had so nearly escaped him. They were not yet, however, by the laws of the Vikings, indisputably his. All the spoils that had been taken in the morning were collected together, according

to custom, on the sea-shore, in order that they might be divided amongst the warriors by lot, and with a trembling hand Ferreis deposited the boots upon the common heap, around which the troops were gathered with covetous eyes. Here they attracted the attention of Torquetil, who, setting them apart with the but of his lance, requested in the tone of one who did not expect to be refused, that he might be permitted to retain them for himself. The sullen looks of the greedy crew betrayed the unwillingness which no tongue desired to be the first in declaring. Inguar, however, who saw the anxiety of his foster-brother, walked toward the Vikingr, and seizing the boots which they had earned so dearly, flung them back upon the heap. "If the lots declare them thine," said he, "thou mayest claim them, and not otherwise; for lives as valiant as thine own have been adventured for this spoil."

A low clashing of arms announced the general approbation of this speech, and the casting of lots commenced. The boots were amongst those things which fell to the share of Inguar, and he gave them to Ferreis. The latter was deeply grateful for the gift.

"The preservation of my life," said he, as he drew on the boots, "was nothing, for that Destroyer might have done without thee; but the preservation of my boots, from the great hoofs of Torquetil, is what endears thee to my heart. I will call the one Defiance, and the other Rugen, and together they shall be termed the Foster-brothers, in commemoration of this day's adventure. They shall be dear to me as the shining handy-work of Biger, the armourer of Upsal, which hangs from my girdle. But for thee, thou wilt do well to beware of the Vikingr."

CHAPTER XL.

THE month of fair days had gone by, and the nightless month had already warmed the frozen mountains of the north, before the fleet of the adventurers, leaving behind them all sight of shore, ventured to direct their course by the guidance of the stars alone. At first, directing their prows northward from the Skaggerac, along the coasts of Nordland, they had proceeded so far, that in the calm nights the thunder of the great whirlpool of the north was heard distinctly by the pilots. It was then that, opposing their sculptured sterns to the hills of Nordland, they ventured out upon the great abyss of ocean, careful to keep at night the light of the Great Dog upon the right side of the ship and that of the Shining Mane at noon upon the left. They came nearly within sight of that lonely isle* of snow, which, not long after, was discovered by the ships of the Vikingr Neddod, and peopled by the men of Nordland. Here the wind struck them on the right, and the rowers rested from their labour. Turning their prows toward the World of Fire,† and spreading their broad sails upon the mast, they darted swiftly along the surface of the sea, like ravenous dolphins in pursuit of prey. It was now that the sluggish temper of the warriors made itself apparent. By day they did nothing but devour their undressed meat, pass round the drinking cup without distinction of persons, until all, except the pilots and the captains, were intoxicated, and murmur sulkily against their leader. By night they slept in heaps like swine in the bottom of the boats. They were dissatisfied at being now a month without the opportunity of plunder, for, lazy as they were, the hope of havoc never failed to rouse them.

* Iceland.

† So they termed the south.

The crews, having nothing else to occupy their attention, began to recal to mind the fatal omens which had preceded their departure, and many said that they would be fulfilled through the indiscretion of Torquetil in venturing on so long a course at sea. On the fifth day after they had turned their prows to the south, there was a whisper among the crew of the Vikingr, that the Raven had been seen a second time to droop his wings that morning. To many this was a sure denotement of a speedy and a dark adventure, and, superstitious as the omen was, the result did not belie it.

Toward noon, a cry from one of the ships on the left aroused Inguar from one of his moods of meditation. It became general throughout the fleet, and the youth on looking up saw all heads turned toward the east. In that direction Inguar also looked, and the cause of their alarm was manifest. A fleet of more than two hundred sail, darkened the surface of the horizon, nearly trebling in number the force of the Vikingr of Sitheod. Prudence would have suggested flight, but this was against the war customs of the north in any circumstances. The Vikingr, hoisting the Raven banner with his own hand, and waving it aloft, gave orders to prepare for battle. The ringing of harness, the rapid movement of the warriors, the gleaming of battle-axes, and the gathering of shining skiolds in line of defence, manifested the readiness with which this order was obeyed, although the gloomy omens gave their enemies a manifest advantage, by destroying their own confidence of conquest. The hour of their mid-day meal had not yet arrived, so that the men were all perfectly sober; and even if it were otherwise, the point of honour was so strict among these men of blood and pride, that not a weapon would have been unsheathed against them until they could fight on terms of perfect equality. The Jarl Torquetil, having given orders that they should advance to meet the foe, for

the hostile banners of Nordland had been already recognised, the fleet proceeded to join conflict in a regular order; the rowers measuring their strokes with steadiness, and chaunting their war song aloud, while the warriors broke its burthen with shouts of defiance as fierce as they were brief. Both fleets advanced to the shock, after the manner of their land forces, in the form of a wedge. The Jarl's ship was in the front, and Inguar, as he waited the moment of action, with an anxious spirit, turned round to observe the sanguine countenances of his fellow-warriors.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE name of Gurmund, the youthful Vikingr of Nordland (soon after a sound of terror on the western and southern coasts of Europe), had also long been formidable amongst the iron-hearted pirates of the north. Inguar, who had often heard it, stood up in haste to gaze upon the sanguinary hero. It was easy, by its size and splendour, to see that the foremost ship was that of the renowned king of the sea. It was a vessel of pinewood, manned by rowers and warriors in coats of shining mail. The gunwales were richly adorned with plates of gold and silver, and on the mast-head was the gilded figure of a cormorant placed on a spindle, and indicating by its changes of position the direction of the wind. The stern was decorated with the statue of a bull with gilded horns; and in the prow the Enchanted Standard waved heavily above the whitened waters. Behind the rowers, distinguished above the rest by his lofty position in the ship, by the grandeur of his form, by his gilded helmet, and his coat of brazen armour, stood the Vikingr, as motionless in figure as he was reputed to be immoveable in

courage and in cruelty. His only weapon was a ponderous club of oak which rested on his shoulder, and was stuck round in a fearful manner with the heads of lances. It was his boast that this barbarous weapon never had been cleansed from the gore with which it was imbrued in battle; and that not even the magic armour forged by the dwarfs of Lapland was able to resist its stroke. Close behind this bark were those of Bascai and of Halfden, the unhappy chiefs for whom, in after years, the Quida was sung upon the hills of Ashdown, in the hearing of the triumphant camp of Ethelred and Alfred. On the stern of the one appeared a gilded lion, and on that of the other a dragon of burnished brass. Next to these were Osberne and Harold, and many another chief whose name was afterwards recorded in the cruel annals of Ireland and of Saxon England. Their vessels were scarcely less formidable, though not so splendid, as that of the Bay-king. The remainder of the fleet were a kind of twelve-oared barks, some well provided with arrows, and ponderous stones for the catapulta; while all were furnished with the common weapons of offence, besides cables made from the hide of the northern horse-whale, and grappling-irons which they used, as the eagle does his talons, to hold their enemy to the combat. The skiolds of the warriors formed a shining wall of defence round every vessel, and glittered in the sunshine along the oblique line of the great wedge.

When the two fleets had approached within a bow-shot of each other, the Nordmen divided their force, in order that they might engage on equal terms. The combat then began with songs and shouts of furious defiance. The rowers leaned upon their ashen oars, and made the vessels speed to the conflict like war-steeds to the shock. It was brief and bloody. The depressing presage of the warriors of Sitheod diminished their energy, and the catapulta gave the Nordmen a terrific advantage; masses of

rock were hurled in showers through the air, and the ships of their enemies went down as fast as sand-shells near a beach. Shouts, groans, and yells of hatred accompanied the flight of the arrows, and the stroke of the ringing battle-axe; and the lonely wilderness of ocean, so short a time before a lifeless waste, was now a scene of sanguinary and extensive tumult. Not even here, amid the still remoteness of this watery solitude, could peace remain secure from human passion. Some were struck in the ship, some went down quickly, embarrassed by the weight of armour, or caught in the rigging of the sinking vessels, while many received the death-blow as they swam upon their wooden skiolds. The waves acquired the tinge of human blood, and the winds were loaded with the laughter of the desperate, and the shouts of the triumphant. At length the remnant of the fleet of Torquetil, disheartened by the recollection of the fatal bodements, and losing all fear of disgrace in sudden panic, turned aside their prows and fled, leaving Torquetil alone in the centre of the hostile force. They were pursued by Bascai, and many others, in the direction of those islands to which, to-day, we give the name of Ferro; nor did either those who fled, or those who followed, ever again rejoin the warriors they had left. The ship of Torquetil did not long maintain the contest, although the Nordman, grappling singly with his rival, forbade the approach of any other vessel. The men of Sitheod were hewn down like young oaks, and Ingvar, with astonishment, saw that Ferreis, their commander, and himself, were among the few who yet survived. Having lost his weapons in the fight, he owed his life to the mercy of a fair-haired Nordman, who, pitying his youth, bade him enter the ship of Thorgils, and take refuge underneath his skiold. At this moment Ferreis had an opportunity of repaying the debt which Ingvar laid on him at Rugen. The latter was about to spring amongst the Nordmen,

when Torquetil, casting an eye askance, suddenly aimed at him a blow with his battle-axe, exclaiming : " Ha! runaway! " The stroke was intercepted by Ferreis, who was on the watch for some attempt of the kind, and in the next instant the terrible club of Thorgils had crushed the spine of the revengeful Bay-king of Sitheod.

The few surviving warriors conceived it no disgrace to accept of quarter from a chief like Thorgils, and were received into his service. Three rapid hours of gloomy suspense and fearful violence had passed since first the cry on the left had startled Inguar, and now the bloody waves were all that he beheld of the great body of his late companions.

CHAPTER XLII.

FINDING Inguar willing to embrace his service, the Vikingr Gurmund did not suffer him to meet with farther injury. He learned from the crew that they were bent on the invasion of certain islands in the south and west, which were already not unknown to the Norwegian arms ; and, from their description of one in particular, he had no doubt it was the same which had formed the subject of the Norwegian minstrel's praise at the festival of Odin.

The fleet of the conqueror divided on its arrival in what were termed, by ancient geographers, the Hyperborean seas. Part sailed for Gaul, and part, under the command of Gurmund himself, directed its course towards the isle of Inismore, which, however, was not intended to be the object of the invasion. Proceeding southward, they anchored for a day and night on the shores of Powisy, near the mouth of the dangerous Dee. As, leaning over the prow of his vessel, he viewed in si-

lence the shores of merry England, Inguar was seized with a strong desire of separating himself from his new companions, and seeking alone his fortune in this new and fertile country. He felt no inclination to share either the good or evil fortune of the Norwegians, and though his latter life had given him something of the mechanical courage of a warrior, the adventures he coveted were not those of military life. The level coast lay distant only half a mile, and the fall of night afforded him, ere long, an opportunity of indulging his inclinations. Letting himself quietly down into the darkened waters, while his companions slept beneath their skiolds, he had swam more than half the way when a full bright moon arose to light him through the remainder. The tide was at low water mark when he wrung his dripping garments on the beach, so that a long tract of mingled stones and mud lay between him and the strand. Passing this dreary space, on which the only objects he discerned were the bodies of some pirates, gibbeted according to the law of the country at low water mark, until they were washed over by three successive tides, the Swede pursued his way along the banks of the Dee, and arrived at morning within sight of the valley were stood, in earlier times, the celebrated monastery of Bangor. Its ruins still extended over a mile and a half of land, and traces of monastic agriculture were still apparent, though near two centuries had passed since the fearful massacre of Legacester, in which above a thousand of the brotherhood had perished. Wandering alone amid the ruins, Inguar was met by some monks who had taken up their abode in a little corner of the vale. Attracted by his strange attire they questioned him, and discovering by his signs that he was in want of an employment, received him into their abode. Here he remained undisturbed for many years, during which, by the exertion of a mind not of the lowest capacity, he made himself master not only of the language of the

country, but of nearly all the popular learning of the day. Within the last year he had left the valley, and taken up the profession of a travelling book-vender (in those days no inglorious calling), transcribing frequently with his own hand the volumes which he offered for sale. It was in one of those excursions he arrived at the school house of Vuscfraea, and made the acquaintance of the young Northumbrian.

Seated on the banks of the Nene, beneath the ashen grove, with the city of Cair Dorme upon his left, and the water murmuring at their feet, the Scandinavian related as much of the foregoing narrative as he could in prudence communicate to Kenric. Having devoted some hours to refreshment and repose, they then continued their journey along the Gwethelin highway, and arrived at length upon those dreary fens that surrounded the city of Cair Grant, the metropolis of the East Angles. Pleased as he was in some respects with his companion, Kenric imagined that it scarce became the relative of duke Elfwin, and the distinguished pupil of Alcuin, to make an intimate of a travelling book-vender. They accordingly separated on their arrival in Cair Grant, a town at that time superior in size, but little in appearance, to that which he had left. The first step which the young Northumbrian took on entering the place, was to issue challenges to the professors in the various schools to dispute publicly with him on certain branches of science and literature. Though not invariably successful, he distinguished himself sufficiently to attract general attention and applause, and to procure him the immediate offer of several chairs of instruction in the schools. It unfortunately happened, however, in this as in other cases, that what was easily gained was not highly valued, and Kenric was scarcely well fixed in one condition when his unsatisfied and restless temper made him long for another. By these means, before a year had elapsed, his character

was so disadvantageously known in the place, that none who wished to avoid caprice and quarrelling would enter into an engagement with the great Northumbrian scholar.

At first this general disinclination had only the effect of wounding Keuric's pride, and waking a sense of wrong. By degrees, however, when it began to affect his fortunes in the most practical manner, his confidence in his own propriety of conduct began to be shaken. He could not, nevertheless, bring himself in any instance to sue where he was accustomed to be sued, and he preferred leaving East Anglia altogether for some more favourable scene.

The morning on which he adopted this resolution was in the depth of winter. Crossing the Wandleburie hills, famous for the Vandal camp, and in after days for Ger-vase of Tilbury's spectral knight, he reached the beautiful city of Cair Wattelin* (the Verolamium of the Romans), where he passed some days in amusement and repose. Continuing his journey from thence to the city of Cair Lud,† he fell, in the very outskirts of the future emporium of trade and commerce, into the hands of a body of rogues or palliards, who, after leaving him senseless on the road, deprived him of everything except his books and clothing. Recovering consciousness, he wandered along, still much enfeebled; and, entering the city by that part which now bears the name of Highbgate, walked along the streets in the utmost dejection, both of mind and frame. In this state of destitution, sitting down to rest upon the shore of the Thames, he heard a familiar voice pronounce his name, and turning, beheld with surprise and joy the figure of the Scandinavian book-vender. The latter manifested the utmost sympathy at his misfortune, and understanding the object of his journey to Cair

* St. Albans.

† London.

Lud, conveyed him, by several turnings, to the house of an inhabitant of Inisfail, who was an acquaintance of his own. On entering the dwelling Kenric was presented to an old man whose countenance, though far from being well-favoured, gave strong indications of Milesian origin. He received Inguar with the manner both of a friend and a superior, and at his request bestowed the utmost kindness and attention on the wounded Northumbrian, whose hurts by this time gave him keen uneasiness. They had him conveyed to a sleeping room, where his bruises were dressed, and all his wants supplied, with a care and tenderness that excited both his admiration and his gratitude.

Expressing these feelings to Inguar in the course of his recovery, the latter informed him that the old man was one of the petty princes of Inisfail, who had been obliged to seek refuge in exile from the injustice of his own tribe, and from the ambition of a young usurper, who had not only deprived him of his just inheritance, but even pursued his life with the fiercest rancour, and defamed his character with the most atrocious calumnies. Although the old man used every effort in his power to resist this unjust invasion of his rights, the malice of the usurper had prevailed. The adherents of the rightful heir being either dispersed or slain, he was himself with difficulty able to preserve his life by voluntary banishment. Deeply interested, no less by these circumstances than by the old man's personal kindness to himself, Kenric expressed the warmest commiseration at what he heard, and the strongest detestation of the conduct of the usurper. Inquiring into the names of the parties and the scene of the events described, Inguar replied that motives of prudence at present obliged the exile to keep both a secret. He had not yet given up all hope of regaining his inheritance, and his chief hope in doing so lay in the precaution with which the task was under-

taken. To Kenric the circumstances of the case appeared so strong, that he thought no course of proceedings could be too open for the purpose of procuring sympathy and succor, but Inguar shook his head at the suggestion, and told him he knew nothing of such affairs.

In a few nights after, the indisposition of Kenric being at its height, and Inguar, who attended him most closely, being absent on some necessary business, the aged exile came to watch beside his bed. Kenric could not forbear introducing the subject which had interested him so much, and the exile, not displeased at the warmth with which he spoke, gave him a detail of his wrongs and his misfortunes, which deepened tenfold the impression already made by the narrative of Inguar. The conversation dropped at length, and both were for a long time silent. During one portion of his narrative, Kenric observed him several times turn deadly pale, and glance hurriedly aside, with an emotion that more nearly resembled fear, than the natural indignation excited by the consciousness of wrong. This circumstance led the Northumbrian to suspect that the exile, as is said of the Merovingian kings, might have lost his inheritance by his incapacity.

Towards midnight, as the Northumbrian lay yet awake, his surprise and curiosity were both strongly excited by hearing the voice of the exile seeming to address some person present in a deep and earnest whisper:

"Why shouldst thou hesitate?" he said. "Is not our cause, our creed, our wrong, the very same? Is he not equally the foe of both?"

Kenric looked around, and saw with increased surprise that the exile spoke in his sleep. His shoulder rested against the wall, and his countenance expressed the keenest sensations of anxiety, impatience, and entreaty.

Suddenly, while Kenric gazed upon the old man, his manner wholly changed.

"He ne'er will do it," he said, in a tone of contempt; "he is too soft of heart; I must myself—" Then beckoning rapidly with his hand, "Quick, Eimhir, quick! He comes! They say thou art an archer in a thousand; now prove it. Ha! well done! Thou shalt have gold for it. Give me the bow and quiver—now begone."

Regarding what he heard as nothing more than the incoherence of a fancy excited by the sense of wrong and unfettered by sleep, Kenric made no account of these expressions. Mentioning what had past, on the following day, to Inguar, the latter informed him that the old exile was subject to a disorder which visited him at long intervals, and frequently affected his mind in the most violent manner. In such cases it was remarkable, he said, that nature often hurried into violent contraries, the gentlest persons becoming most furious, the purest most debased, and the holiest most profane. On the recovery of Kenric, the pressing instances of the old man, and his continued kindness, induced him to give up, for some time longer, the idea of separating from the latter, and the prolongation of the acquaintance deepened the feeling of attachment into a species of devotion.

In the course of a fortnight after his first introduction to the exile, the latter, one day, entered his apartment with a countenance bright with joy. He informed the Northumbrian that all now was ready for the progress of the scheme by which he designed to recover possession of his patrimonial inheritance in Inisfail; and he proposed that Kenric should accompany him in his expedition. The latter, ever desirous of change, assented with readiness and even ardour. Preparations were instantly made for their departure, and the Northumbrian learned with pleasure that the friends whom the exile had at length engaged to espouse his cause, awaited him with a fleet of moderate force not far from the mouth of the Thames.

His feelings, however, changed considerably, when In-

guar, who was also of their number, by an inadvertence, suffered him to understand that these friends were no other than a fleet of the Scandinavian Vikingr, with whom the exile had contrived to form a correspondence, and whom he had easily induced, by hopes of profit, to undertake his cause. Kenric, who had no objection to assist the exile in what seemed to him an honorable warfare, was, however, by no means inclined to join his arms to those of the Vikingr. He remonstrated, in the strongest terms, on the imprudence, and even the hideous impropriety, of introducing, into the bosom of a well-ordered country, a horde of such untutored savages, no matter how excellent the purpose. His arguments, however, appeared to make no impression on the exile; and, after a long discussion, the old man cut it short, by saying :

“It is plain, then, Kenric, that I must no longer count on thy assistance. I am satisfied that we should part, but only under one condition. What thou hast learned of my design was told thee under an impression which thou hast now destroyed. Since thou canst not aid, thou wilt not at least betray me.”

“I should be base, indeed,” said Kenric, warmly, “if I could be capable of abusing hospitality like that which I have met from thee.”

“Thou wilt promise, then,” said the exile, “that not a word shall escape thee, without my desire, of what has passed between us on this subject?”

“I freely pledge myself to that,” said the Northumbrian, “and deeply grieve that I can do no more.”

On the following evening Kenric bade farewell to Inguar and his host, and remained long looking after their small skiff, as it glided swiftly down the Thames. It surprised him that the exile, knowing his destitute condition, had left him at parting without any means of providing for his immediate wants; but he willingly

attributed it to mere abstraction of mind. Once more, thrown back upon his own resources, he passed some miserable months between the cities of Cair Lud and Oder, * until, at length, his spirits lowered by continual disappointment, and his mind tormented with self-reproach, he took the road which led to the Northumbers, without any definite knowledge of his own intentions.

CHAPTER XLIII.

IN the mean time, Elim, pursuing his journey to the isle of Hy, turned out of his course to visit that part of Northumberland which contained the home of his early associate. What had become of Kenric since they parted? What line of life had he embraced? Had he assumed the profession of arms, of which he had spoken with so much enthusiasm on the morning of their separation at Muingharid? And in whatever condition he had since embraced his part, was the recollection of their friendship still alive within him, and would his joy at their meeting be now less fervent than his own?

Such thoughts as these passed frequently through the mind of the Ithian as he travelled towards Kenric's native town, in a swinging carriage, such as those used by the wealthier Anglo-Saxons of the period. Arriving in the Dene, he took up his abode in one of those houses of entertainment, established for the accommodation of travellers of his nation. In the course of the evening he made many inquiries, concerning Kenric's family, of his host, a person filling a place almost exactly similar to that of the beatach in his native island; but that his establishment was supported by charitable contributions from wealthy

inhabitants of Inisfail, and not by a grant of lands from the civil authorities. This person could give him little information, except that he had heard of such a person as Kenric, a scholar in high repute, who had left his family in the town, very abruptly, some years before. He was now, he believed, leading a suspected life in East Anglia, a portion of the Heptarchy, which, from the neglected condition of its government, and dissensions concerning the regal succession, was fast relapsing into Paganism.

This intelligence, scanty as it was, excited to an intense degree the desire of Elim to learn something further of his friend. After many inquiries, he was able to discover the residences of his father and uncle, but he preferred seeking for information at the hands of the latter, whom he had already seen when the old man came to leave his nephew, Kenric, at Muingharid. Accordingly, choosing a time when he should be most likely to find him at leisure, he left his lodging, and rambled in the direction of the school.

The lecture was hardly ended, when he arrived at the little bridge which had been the scene of Kenric's early visions. Elim waited until the house was emptied of its noisy throng, which was dispersed in different directions, reminding him of his own boyhood and Deochain Neassan. He did not, however, suffer these thoughts at present to delay his purpose long, but presented himself at the door of the schoolmaster's house, and was instantly admitted into the presence of Vuscfraea.

The uncle of Kenric regarded him with a harsh and suspicious eye, as soon as he heard him introduce himself as his nephew's friend.

"His friend, say'st thou?" he said, in a severe tone; "and what friend pray? A friend of the schools, or of the taverns? A friend to perplex his brain with damning subtleties, or make it drunk with the wassail cup at midnight? Ha, cunning one! A friend to flatter his

accursed vanity, and drag him headlong and blindfold to destruction with thyself? A friend to the false gods of the East Angles, is it? Ha!"

"No such friend, father," answered Elim, mildly, "but the friend of his boyhood, and one of his oldest school companions at Muingharid."

"Muingharid!" exclaimed Vuscfraea, in an altered voice, and surveying Elim now with a less harsh attention. "That has a different sound, indeed."

Now, without further roughness, he bade Elim take his seat, and heard his inquiries for his youthful friend with calmness. Little could he obtain from him, however, in addition to what he had already learned from the lips of his host Kenric was, at present, he said, in East Anglia, nor was it likely, owing to some family occurrences, that he would return to Northumberland for a considerable time. When Elim endeavoured to procure some contradiction or corroboration of what his host had repeated to him as the common voice of rumour respecting the present pursuits of Kenric, his uncle evaded the questions, or answered them with a morose reserve.

Still, all night long, he thought or dreamed of Kenric, and his thoughts and visions were of an unpeaceful kind. Rising early in the morning, he left his lodging, and passing through the outskirts of the little town, continued his walk for some distance along the banks of the river; until the winter sun, not fully above the horizon when he had set out, made the objects more distinct around him. The place through which he rambled was a valley, fertile and agreeable in the summer season, though now disrobed by the rending blasts of winter, and looking wild with its naked woods and groves. At a short distance from the spot on which he stood, appeared an Anglo-Saxon temple of simple architecture, with a burying-ground attached. The building was of moderate size, with a porch supported by six simple columns, between which

appeared within a lofty arched doorway, oblong and narrow, like that of a portcullis. While he stood contemplating the edifice, the morning suddenly changed. The clouds arose in dreary masses from behind the northern mountains, and a heavy sleet was driven athwart the prospect, by a keen and searching wind. There was no nearer shelter than the humble wooden dwelling of the person who was charged with the care of the house of worship, and whose door stood open at this early hour. Wrapping his Irish cloak around his person, Elim walked rapidly towards the place, and reached it in time to escape the bitterness of the shower.

Here, while he awaited the subsiding of the inclement gust, he observed the figure of a man in a sitting posture, between the pillars of the temple, his hands clasped around his knees and his head resting upon them, as if he were not aware that the snow was driving full upon his person. So motionless was his attitude, that but for the wind which occasionally lifted the folds of his attire, Elim would have doubted whether he beheld a living being, or its inanimate resemblance. Perplexed at this appearance, and moved with compassion, Elim, as soon as the shower was over, went towards the temple, and gently shaking the poor wretch in order to awaken his attention, placed a scrubal (a small coin of his country) in his hand. The latter received it with an absent look, like one awaked from a deep sleep, and Elim, after advising him to look out speedily for shelter, departed from the place.

He had proceeded a considerable way on his return, pursuing such reflections as the incident might naturally suggest, when he suddenly felt some one pluck his cloak from behind ; turning round, he beheld the wasted figure of the stranger whom he had been assisting. The latter, taking Elim's hand between his own cramped fingers, replaced the coin, and said :

“Do not rob thyself, stranger. Thou art charitable, but I am not in want of this.”

Elim could not avoid smiling at this precise display of independence, while he blushed at his mistake.

“I ask thy forgiveness for my alms,” said he, “but if thou wilt not receive it, thou must need fire and food at least. Come with me, then, where I too must be indebted to charity for both.”

With some persuasion, the stranger agreed to accompany him, though not until he had explained the nature of the establishment in which he resided. Some further difficulty arose in consequence of the rule of the place, the stranger declaring himself unentitled to its hospitality on the score of country. But this objection Elim undertook to obviate.

They found the refectory thronged with strangers of Elim's nation, who were already assembled for the morning meal of the establishment, and conversing busily according to their different vocations. To Elim the novelty of the scene afforded considerable entertainment; but the stranger who accompanied him, drawing close to the blazing log which lay upon the hearth, did not seem to pay much attention to what passed around him. One spoke of the wars of Charlemagne, another of the increasing ravages of the Northmen; a merchant returning from Amalfi, after disposing of his winter stock of furs, excited the interest of an attentive group with tales of the ruthless Lombard cavalry, whose hoofs resounded now in the fertile vineyards and corn-fields of Italy; while another lot of listeners were entertained with the narrative of a pilgrim, relating accounts not less affecting of the spreading power of the Saracens in Spain. The appearance of the customary refreshments interrupted these discourses, and Elim's attention was turned from the distresses on the continent to the figure of the stranger whom he had invited.

The latter was a man of a thin shape, with a very worn and piercing expression of countenance ; his eyes restless, his hair and beard disordered, and his dress, though of showy material, looking much abused. As their refection proceeded, Elim observed him listening sometimes with a look of disdain to the conversation of those around him, and sometimes gazing on his own features with increasing earnestness. Not desiring to prolong an acquaintance so entirely casual, Elim took no notice of this circumstance, but, as soon as their meal was ended, arose with the rest, and stood near the fire. In a few minutes, while many voices spoke around him, he heard one, lower but more earnest than the others, saying, as if to some one near him :

“Those who lead lives the steadiest, are least altered by the change of time. It is no wonder that I should recognize you first. Have you quite forgot me, Elim ?”

At the sound of his own name, Elim turned quickly round, and beheld the stranger in the act of addressing him. The change from boyhood to maturity had been so great, that even yet it was with difficulty Elim was able to recognize the face of Kenric, his Anglo-Saxon school-fellow.

CHAPTER XLIV.

NEITHER the place, nor the presence of so many strangers could restrain the delight of Elim at beholding his old friend so unexpectedly. He even forgot Kenric's own wretchedness, and the distressing circumstances under which he had found him ; he forgot every thing but himself ; he heard nothing, he saw nothing for the time but Kenric, and embraced him with a glowing heart.

"Most gladly met, dear Kenric," he exclaimed, with eyes full of eagerness and delight. "It was to seek thee I came hither, and I have been searching for thee in every corner. Where hast thou hidden thyself? I was at thine uncle's. How long hast thou returned from East Anglia?"

"Not long," answered Kenric, more calmly, and seeming a little confused at the transports of his friend; "let us come to some more convenient place, and I will tell thee all."

Elim hastened to find his *bàrréad*, and drew it quickly on his head. They left the house, and returned together to the fields without the town, walking rapidly, and conversing, as they hurried along, in broken sentences.

"And what brought thee among the Saxons, Elim?" asked Kenric, after they had passed the outermost habitations, and found themselves entirely alone.

"Nay, nay," said Elim, "thou hast not heeded half my queries yet. How dull my eyes were when they knew thee not. How thin thou art! How miserably thin! but no matter, thou must be fattened shortly. Come, give an account of thyself, quickly; why thou hast left East Anglia—why thou art in town unknown to thy uncle—and why——"

Suddenly the recollection of the morning scene at the temple darted on Elim's mind, and he stopped short, conceiving at once that he had been obtruding his boisterous joy upon a mind suffering, perhaps, at this instant, under some recent and deep affliction. For what else could account for the singular apathy he had manifested in so dreary a situation?

Kenric, however, did not justify this surmise in his present conversation. With a briskness not inferior to that of Elim's joy, he proceeded to answer the questions asked him by his friend.

"I have had adventures enough, Elim, since I saw

thee last," he said ; " some good, some evil, some tolerable enough, and some glorious ones."

" How glorious, Kenric?" asked Elim.

" I will tell thee presently," replied his friend. " Dost thou see that old castle on the hill?"

" I do," answered Elim ; " is that your father's?"

" Pish, no !" said Kenric, with a contemptuous smile ; " ah, poor old times ! old times ! Elfwin, one of our great dukes, lives there. I gave him a glorious beating by his own fireside once, upon a question of chronology."

" What question?" asked Elim.

" Oh, I had forgot," replied Kenric, with a short laugh ; " one long at rest, now, and let us leave it so. But, duke as he was, thou wouldst laugh to see how ill he took the defeat. He was silly enough to tell my father not to bring me to the castle any more. So much for scholastic dukes !"

" Dost thou intend to return to East Anglia again, Kenric?" asked Elim.

" Think too, of his denying me his patronage, because I proved myself most worthy of it, upon his own arguments. His patronage ! These nobles think that land and gold is all. My father may value his patronage as highly as he pleases, but it is not the first nor only point on which he and I have differed."

Elim, who did not feel much entertainment in this, endeavoured to turn the discourse, and obtain from his friend an account of those varied adventures of which he had spoken. Kenric seemed to desire no better amusement than that of relating them, nor any higher prize than an individual willing to listen. He hurried quickly enough over his life at Muinghamrid, after Elim had left that seminary ; confessing to the latter that it had been rather dull, as had been likewise the first few months which followed his arrival in Northumberland.

The weather lightened, however, a little, he said, when his uncle (a laughable old fellow, a schoolmaster in the town), procured him an introduction to Alcuin, at the time when he was about leaving England, on the invitation of the famous Charlemagne, and whom he accompanied into Gaul.

"What!" exclaimed Elim, "hast thou then, Kenric, been a traveller?"

"Only over half Europe," replied his friend, pleased at the deferential air in which this was spoken; "but that's a trifle."

"And at the court of Charlemagne! What Kenric! Didst thou ever see the Emperor?"

"Pooh, yes, a hundred times. This dagger was his gift."

"To thee, Kenric!"

"Pish, ay—they say he loved the renown of letters not less than that of arms; so he gathered all the light he could around him, and fancied, or made Europe fancy, it his own, though his head, meanwhile, continued as opaque as the round ball in the centre of a candelabrum. He gave me this for writing a treatise, which, without vanity (a thing you will give me credit for despising), in the opinion of better judges, had something in it. I suppose I must keep it about me, as the giver was an emperor, although, to say the truth, I never valued it."

"Never valued the gift of Charlemagne!" Elim exclaimed, involuntarily.

"Never, in truth," said Kenric; "besides, it is so beautiful a toy that many will be asking where it was procured; and then thou knowest it looks so like display to begin telling its history—I wrote such a thing—and such and such things were said of it by such and such great scholars—Charlemagne read it, and declared so and so, and gave me this dagger, wrought by his own armourer, and worn by himself in his wars against

the Jutes, as a mark of his imperial admiration. There are many fellows, I know, who can say these things of themselves without difficulty, but, for my part, I have not the face for such a thing."

Elim made no reply, and Kenric proceeded.

"So much the worse for myself perhaps. If I were able to do as others do, I might thrive as others thrive. But Tours! But Bavaria! There, indeed, my dear Elim, the sun began to shine upon my course. There, indeed, I may truly say that I gave something like an appearance of rationality to their foolish applause, which was as ridiculous as it was loud and general already. If ever I could bring myself to indulge in self-complacency, I will only say that I do not know a period of my life at which it would have been more excusable. And even you, Elim, who so far excel me in modesty, would pardon me for yielding a little, when my unfinished scrap, a thing carelessly done, and the work of an idle fortnight, obtained the applause of the most learned men in Tours. Not that it was by any means such an effort as I would wish to found a reputation upon—for never were less pains bestowed on anything of the kind—but people will have their fancies. Sometimes, they say, these things come involuntarily. You shall see it, and judge for yourself."

CHAPTER XLV.

ELIM thanked him, and he ran on in the same strain during their walk, relating, with the utmost minuteness, several circumstances of his continental life, in which, even Elim's affection could hardly enable him to take an interest. It would seem that East Anglia and Cair Lud had not been the scene of so many of Kenric's "glorious" adventures, as he termed them, for he hurried

quickly, and with little distinctness, over that portion of his story. "I would not have left the south," he said, "but that I longed to see my mother. I have reasons for wishing to see her, and if I could do so, without the risk of meeting my father—"

"The risk of meeting thy father!" exclaimed Elim, in astonishment.

Kenric looked confused, for in relating his narrative he had suppressed all mention of the domestic dissension which had preceded his departure. Finding, however, that he could do so no longer, without suffering in the good opinion of his friend, he gave him a detail of the occurrence, which made Elim wonder at Ailred, and excited his strong indignation against the duke.

"I omitted mentioning the circumstance to thee before," said he, "because one does not like to implicate others, more especially of one's own kin, and those to whom one owes a natural deference; but in truth, dear Elim, I am not a voluntary exile from home. However," he added, perceiving that his friend began to look grave, "this is a subject not adapted for the day of meeting, so it had better be deferred until there is occasion for it. And now that I have done so much for you, tell me some news of Muingharid and Inisfail."

As they continued to stroll along the river side, Elim entered on his task with pleasure, but was surprised at the little interest which his friend appeared to take in his accounts of their old school-fellows, and the little attention which he seemed to pay to anything he said. Every instant Kenric interrupted him with some silly jest, or some anecdote about himself, of which the tale reminded him. Elim, indeed, could not avoid remarking that a great change had taken place in Kenric since they studied together at Deochain Neassan, and this change became more observable as the day advanced, and restraint gave place to increasing familiarity.

Some days elapsed before Kenric renewed the conversation respecting his state of alienation from his family, which he had interrupted on that of their meeting. At first, Elim, whom Kenric had still left ignorant of the origin of the dissension, did not like to hear more of the story, but consented readily on Kenric's telling him that he wished to employ his mediation between his father and himself.

"Little did I imagine, Elim," said Kenric, out of a reverie, as they sat one evening alone together, "when I left Muingharid, that I should ever live to be an outcast from my father's dwelling."

"An outcast, Kenric!" said Elim, in a tone of surprise.

"Ay, by whose fault is not for me to judge," replied his friend. "My own, perhaps, for being blind enough to prefer my principles to my interest. My father wished me to bend to the duke on a debated point between us, and I refused. The duke grew stern, and my father took his part against me. So that I must either have compromised my principle (which I should despise to do), or take the step I did."

"Your father against you!" exclaimed Elim, "that was unfortunate! This could not, of course, have been the dispute on which you seemed to laugh so heartily, the other day, at having defeated Elfwin, by his own fireside."

"This—what dispute! Oh, I remember—no—yes—not altogether, Elim;—a part of the same thing. Indeed, I may say the same, although that was only the beginning of the difference."

"I pity you, Kenric. Could Domnona do nothing to make things even again; you seem to speak so gratefully of her affection, one would think she must have had some influence."

"And so she had, Elim ; and if anything could have prevailed with me, her wishes would have done so."

"*Her* wishes !" said Elim, in increased surprise. "What, was she too opposed to you ? Thou hast a fervent spirit, that should support thee singly in the maintenance of principle against such powerful influences."

"They only strengthened me," said Kenric, hastily ; "for you know," he added, restraining himself again, "one would not give up one's principle for parent or uncle."

"What sayest thou, Kenric ? Uncle ? Was Vusfræa too in the enemy's ranks ?"

He was."

All four against thee ?" continued Elim, laughing.

"All four. Why dost thou laugh ?" said Kenric, frowning. "Dost thou doubt me ?"

"Nay," answered Elim, "I only laughed to think what a hard battle I shall have to fight for you against the whole. So begin, and furnish me with a store of good reasons ; for it would be rashly done to enter such a field with an empty quiver."

"Perhaps it would be better not enter it at all," said Kenric, vexed, "for where duke, and father, and mother, and uncle, are already on the other side, who knows how long the friend might continue on mine ?"

"Ah," said Elim, "I see thou hast not lost thy old way of taking a jest too seriously. Well, thou shalt find me a better soldier than thou thinkest."

"Forgive me for what I said," returned Kenric ; "I ought to know it well. Go, then, Elim, without more words. I will furnish thee with no reasons, for reasoning throve but indifferently with me before. Thou canst do for me what I cannot for myself. Thou mayest argue ill, but thou canst do better ; thou canst plead."

Elim, who felt pleased, he scarce knew wherefore, at

this last speech, made no reply, but turned the discourse to some other subject.

CHAPTER XLVI.

EARLY ON the following morning, he made his appearance at the door of Ailred's dwelling. The latter had already left the house, but a sickly-looking female, wrapt up from head to foot in the close folds of the Anglo-Saxon attire, received him in the outer apartment. Elim, who concluded that he beheld the mother of his friend, introduced himself as he had done at the house of Vusefræa, by mentioning Kenric's name, but with more precaution. The glow which spread over the wasted face of the woman, and her sudden eagerness of manner, showed that he was right in his conjecture.

"Come in," said Domnona; "it is a long time now since I heard his name, but neither he, nor his, can ever be unwelcome. The friend of Kenric? Thou comest from East Anglia, then?"

Elim answered in the negative. "I am a native of Inisfail," he said, "and one of Kenric's early school-fellows."

"I know thee already," said Domnona; "thy name was seldom absent from his lips for a long time after his return from Muingharid. Thou art Elim, the Ithian. Thou art welcome for thine own sake now, as thou wert for his before."

Thus introduced, Elim proceeded to acquaint Domnona with the object of his visit, but could obtain little encouragement from her in his hope of finding Ailred grown more lenient.

"Speak to him," she said, "speak thyself to my hus-

band, and may he hear thee kindly ; but if Kenric be not changed, neither, I fear, will he find his father so."

While she was speaking, Ailred entered. He stopped short on the threshold, surveying the Ithian with a sullen eye, while Domnona went into an inner apartment, leaving Elim to say to her husband what he had said already to herself.

Ailred returned with stiffness the greeting with which Elim prefaced his business, and listened to him with a contracted brow until he had heard the name of Kenric.

"What! Kenric sent thee, did he?" he exclaimed, with a look of harsh satisfaction. "He has found out at last that he was in the wrong, hath he? Hath the world taught him wisdom? I thought it would. I told him what it was to follow his own way."

"I think with thee," said Elim, mildly, "that obedience is at all times a safer course than the way of pride and of self-will."

"What couldst thou say else? Thou hast good reason to think it. If thou beest Kenric's friend, I would thy friendship could convince his stubborn will of that. Thou art rational in what thou sayest: be seated."

"Nay," answered Elim, "it needs but little reason to perceive it. We are born to obey; it is the lot of every creature."

"Most true, most true," said Ailred, nodding his head, in decided approbation.

"It is the foundation of all order," continued Elim, "and the duty of all dependent beings. None such are exempt from obedience. I have already told my friend I thought thou hadst reason in requiring it of him. Subject or king, son or sire, vassal or lord, slave or master, all owe obedience, each in his own place; the highest on earth still owes it to a higher in heaven, and if any break loose to follow his own will, the will is accursed that breaks the moral harmony of such a system."

"I would," cried Ailred, "that Kenric had thy principles. Thou never wert in Gaul; thou never scratched sheep-skin in Bavaria; thou hast not, like the bookmen, fifty heads on thy shoulders instead of the single one that nature gave thee at thy birth."

"Nay," continued Elim, willing to go as far with Ailred as he could, "the humblest mind can understand these truths. Obedience is safe, and he who despises safety is not brave but a fool, for safety is the end of danger. So I told Kenric."

"Thou never hadst, young man," said Ailred, increasing in satisfaction, "thou never hadst, as he had, the thoughts of fifty brains, scraped out of dusty parchments, to addle thine own. I could hear thee for ever upon obedience."

"It is a blessed virtue," continued Elim; "when simplest it is best; when most implicit, happiest. He only is free from obedience who has no superior, and where is he on earth? I said as much to thy son."

"Whoever thou art," exclaimed Ailred, "thou art a treasure of a friend to Kenric. Domnona, here! The log is cold upon the hearth. I would he had thy principles. Wilt thou be refreshed? Domnona!"

"Do not disturb thy wife," said Elim; "I need nothing but a little conversation with myself. I come, on behalf of Kenric, to obtain for him a re-admission to the house and the affections of his parents."

"Is he willing, truly?" asked the Anglo-Saxon; "what saith he to thy principle? Does he remember still my wish about the duke? Will he comply on that point?"

"I believe," replied Elim, "thou wilt find him willing, in all reason, to show himself a good son."

"*In all reason, says he?*" exclaimed Ailred; "he may keep himself and all his reason in East Anglia. I know well what Kenric means by all reason. He means so far as it shall please himself. I am no dupe, although I

never cost my father a herd of kine for books. Kenric may tarry, in all reason, where he is, until, reason or unreason, he is prepared to do my pleasure."

"I had hoped," said Elim, "that when thou hadst considered his sufferings, thou wouldst act kindly with him, and be his father again."

"Which is the juster now, I pray you," said Ailred; "which is the more fitting, that he should yield to me or I to him?"

"O, surely he," said Elim, "but is it not easier for thy wisdom to bear with his folly, than for his folly to understand thy wisdom?"

"Thou comest then, after all," said Ailred, "to preach submission to me, instead of bearing it from him. Is this what all thy implicit doctrine comes to? Away with thee, youth, away with thee! If thou beest Kenric's friend, go spend thine eloquence on him. What ado hadst thou to come preaching to me of obedience? Wilt thou advise Kenric to make submission to the duke?"

"I know not the question in dispute between them," answered Elim.

"Of what avail is that? neither do I," cried Ailred. "Some knotty trash of stars and moonshine, which might as well be one thing as the other, for aught that either knew about the matter."

"Kenric hath a scruple upon it, I believe," said Elim, "and methinks the duke, if he be a Christian duke, might well indulge him in his love of principle."

"It matters little, youth," said Ailred, "what that duke is besides—he is the duke; that is enough for Kenric, and must not be gainsaid."

"And what shall I answer to Kenric," asked Elim, with gentleness, "when he tells me that, in adhering to his principle (for he seems to think it is a point of principle), he is no way disobedient."

"How is he to make that appear?" asked Ailred, looking suspicious.

"Surely he will say," answered Elim, "that no one ever deemed it right to obey the lesser law against the greater."

"And thou wilt be at a loss, for all thy eloquence, what to reply?" cried Ailred; "then hear me, youth; do thou and he deliberate the point between you in East-Anglia until you are agreed, for here my pleasure shall be law, and the only law for him to act upon. Thou mayest assure him I will have no other."

"I will do so," said Elim tossing his head, "but I fear he will only tell me that the obedience thou demandest is such a one," he added, reverentially lowering his face, "as we only owe to the law that cannot err."

"It is well," cried Ailred; "thou art fit to fight in such a cause as Kenric's. Thou art a fitting companion for my son. Hast thou, thyself, no subtle notion concerning the moon's age, to fling in a duke's face, and turn thy father's care to nought? Thou hast, I am certain, simple as thou seemest. The friend of Kenric? one of his East-Anglian friends, with whom Vusfræa says he wastes the night over the wassail cup and tœfl-stone? Not that a game of tœfl could do him half the hurt his brain receives from those unprofitable scrolls on which he doats. I would, and so Vusfræa heard me say, that a harmless bowl amongst a merry company had ever been the limit of Kenric's trespass. It were better than the drunkenness of the mind, caused by the flimsy dreams of chicaning casuists. The fumes of the one are off with the next morning wind, but for the other there is little hope of cure; no morning; no awakening."

"It is a sad truth," said the Ithian.

"Ay, sayest thou? I value not thine acquiescence now," said Ailred; "thou art as supple an eel as the rest, and canst wriggle from side to side as readily. Perhaps

thou art one of those who could serve him both ways ? exhaust his purse of its metal at the tavern, and his head of its natural reason at the school ? though in truth, his stock in either, when he left Northumberland, was hardly worth the pilfering And wert thou one of these East-Anglian friends ?”

“My attire might tell thee,” answered Elim, “that I am no native of Inismore. I was the school-fellow of Kenric when he studied at Muingharid.”

“A scholar here or there, it is the same,” cried Ailred ; “the same herd of cunning simpletons they are, I think, throughout all Europe.”

“Am I to tell my friend, then,” asked the Ithian, “that I have failed in my design to serve him ?”

“Say what thou wilt to him,” cried Ailred, waving his hand, as if to end the conversation, “but say no more to me.”

Elim did not think it necessary to press any further his self-exculpation from the home charge made by Ailred ; and not seeing any probability of effecting more good for his friend at this interview, he shortly after left the house. He did not depart, however, with any appearance of discouragement, but seemed, as in fact he was, determined still to persevere in his efforts to effect a reconciliation.

CHAPTER XLVII.

As he passed the end of the building, a small window-frame was thrown open, and he saw Domnona, who had not made her appearance during the discourse, beckoning to him with an anxious visage from within.

“One word,” she said, “before thou goest, Elim. Let

me know the place where thy friend is to be found, if his father or I should have occasion to send for him."

Elim named his own lodging, and the window was closed again. On his arrival there, he found Kenric expecting his return, and related to him the interview which **had** taken place between Ailred and himself. A motive of compassion for his friend made him suppress, so far as **he** could consistently do so, all mention of the mere harshness of Ailred ; and it was even with pain he communicated, in a mitigated way, the account of his disappointment. But the manner in which his friend received the account, led him to perceive that such delicacy was superfluous. Kenric looked only vexed ; and two or three times, as he listened to certain parts of Elim's narrative, the latter, with a disagreeable sensation, observed him endeavouring to suppress a smile.

"Be it so," he exclaimed, when it was concluded, "I have done enough to please him ; and as to the duke, it is nothing but pride in him, a vice which I despise and hate. I should consider it downright criminal in me to flatter any man's pride, as my fath—as I see some people do."

"What was the question in dispute between you ?" asked Elim.

"The question is a matter of no import," answered Kenric ; "it is the fact of my submitting to Elfwin, because he is the duke, that makes the difficulty between my father and myself."

"Well," answered Elim, "and if the question be one of indifference, as Ailred seems to think it is, since we are not dukes ourselves, we may remember that there is something due to rank."

"Rank !" cried Kenric ; "the order of mind is higher than the order of place."

"Ay," replied Elim, "and there is an order nigher than either, Kenric ; the order of the heart. I remember we both thought so at Muingharid."

The Anglo-Saxon started, and looked upon his friend, bitterly mortified, yet not knowing whether to take his words in grief or anger. Elim, however, did not seem inclined, either to add anything to what he had said, or take anything from it, so the conversation dropped for a time.

With a different feeling, however, Kenric appeared to listen to the account which Elim shortly afterwards gave of Domnona's message from the window. It affected him much, and he awaited with suppressed anxiety the arrival of the communication which her words had led him to expect.

In the mean time, Elim found himself compelled to proceed upon his journey, the time being nearly exhausted which he had proposed devoting to his Northumbrian visit. Kenric did not ask him to renew his efforts with Ailred, a circumstance with which Elim was in no way dissatisfied, for he had lost heart in the cause soon after his first interview. Still, however, though he strongly suspected his friend of erring in this point, he was far from feeling towards him the least diminution of affection or esteem. Where anything agreeable occurred in Kenric's conduct, he opened his heart to it as to a glow of sunshine, and to all that seemed to indicate a deteriorated principle, he strove to close his eyes with affectionate incredulity.

Perceiving, however, the occasional fits of depression to which his friend became daily more and more subjected, he felt the difficulty increase of leaving him in this unsettled state of mind. He proposed to him that they should both return to Inisfail, until a further lapse of time should soften the obstacles to a reconciliation with Ailred ; and he was doubly induced to press this step in the hope that it might be of advantage to the mind of Kenric himself. The latter listened to his instances with pleasure, and was only deterred from at once yield

ing his consent by a feeling similar to that which had induced him to replace the scrub in the hand of Elim, on the morning he had found him at the temple porch.

On the evening before Elim's departure for Huy, Kenric had promised to give him a decisive answer with respect to his invitation, and the former walked out alone, leaving him to complete his final deliberations at their lodging. As he passed the school-house of Vuscfraea, he suddenly met the grey-headed old disciplinarian returning to his dwelling, and supporting himself as he walked with an oaken staff. Recognising Elim, he accosted him with less than his accustomed harshness, and after learning from him that he had found his nephew since they parted, and that he hoped, at present, to bring him back to Inisfail, he said, after looking to the right and to the left.

"Thou art young and trusting, and shouldst be wary. Mark this," he continued, touching Elim's arm with the head of his staff: "confidence in the simple-minded is often as dangerous as suspicion is injurious in the ill-intentioned."

"What mean you, father?" asked Elim, with a smile.

"Beware of Kenric," answered the schoolmaster.

"Of Kenric! of my oldest friend!" exclaimed Elim.

"Of him," replied Vuscfraea. "Of thy friend and my nephew. I say, beware of him."

"I am certain," said Elim, warmly, "he intends, he never intended, aught but good to me."

"I bid thee not," returned the old man, "to beware of his intentions, but of himself. There is another to whom he never intended aught but good, and yet has wrought much evil; I mean himself. I warn you, youth, beware of him. I know enough of his life in East-Anglia to justify my charity in placing you upon your guard, but not enough to sanction me in saying more. Farewell!"

The feeling of surprise with which Elim heard him, turned, as the old man spoke, to indignation.

"Father," said he, "I have no right to charge thee with injustice, but yet bear this in mind : there is a kind of men who cannot pass from youth to age without losing their good humor together with their hair, and who employ themselves in finding cause of censure, and in thwarting the innocent enjoyment of the young, as if they imagined that a late want of charity might atone for an early want of wisdom. I am far from charging thee with this moroseness ; I speak not in reproof, but warning. If thou hast a specific charge to make against my friend, out with it. If he have disgraced his name and rendered himself unworthy of confidence, 'tis fit I know it before I yield him mine. What act has Kenric done to justify so dark an intimation?"

"I speak not from his acts," replied Vuscfraea, "so much as from my knowledge of his character."

"It is enough," said Elim ; "thy caution then was needless ; we are but too apt to judge amiss of that without an instigator."

"Do as thou wilt," replied the hoary pedagogue ; "whatever be thy judgment of thyself, I cannot help it. I have done my part in warning thee. It rests with thyself to use or to forget my caution."

With these words he hurried off, as if with the design of avoiding any further question or remark from Elim. The latter was deeply impressed by the apparent sincerity and earnestness of manner with which he had addressed him, but he could not bring himself to entertain the unwelcome doubt which his words were intended to impart.

"He is a good old man," said he, "but over harsh and cautious. He said even worse than this of myself, before I had been well inside his door, at our first interview. Yet why," he added, stopping short, for in the

earnestness of these reflections he had been walking at a rapid pace, "why if there be no need of such a precaution, should I reject the hint with a disturbed mind? Those conversations, do they resemble Kenric's early dialogues? And yet why should he be the very same? How could he, without prejudice to the natural growth of feeling and of mind, remain entirely what he was in boyhood? Ah, let me not deceive myself; Kenric is changed, and it is not the right change that has been made in him. It is not growth, but ugly alteration. It is the work of something more than time, and Vuse-fræa is right and kind, and prudence is necessary. I will use it, therefore, till I have learned to see more clearly."

Settling his mind into a state of calmness, Elim now proceeded with a guarded, though not distrustful heart, to find his friend. On entering the lodging, the latter met him, in an agitation which partook of joy and of anxiety.

"Elim," said he, "I am to see her; I am about to see Domnona. She has sent me word to meet her after dusk upon the bridge, and I have been wishing thee the wings of Hermes ever since, for thy delay was torturing. And yet now thou art come, what do I want of thee? Nothing but to give joy to thy good heart, for I know no surer way of doing so than by telling thee that mine is full of rapture. My mother, Elim, whom I have not seen for a whole year, and whom I left without——" he paused, and seemed with difficulty to suppress a burst of anguish. "Why should I foolishly seek to make thee understand my joy, my ecstasy? Thou knowest her not, thou knowest not all her excellence, her early care, her doating love of me, her piety, her gentleness; ah, gentleness that she has suffered for! ah, gentleness that I have made bitter to myself and her; but what of this? Farewell! retire not for thy life to rest till my return.

I will go with thee to Inisfail, anywhere. Thou mayest see that half my preparations are already made ; complete them for me, and I will be thy companion in the morning."

He hurried off, leaving Elim surprised, delighted, and ashamed, surprised at the unexpected burst of feeling, delighted at the first stroke that since their meeting had thoroughly reminded him of his early friend, and ashamed of what he thought the meanness of his own conduct in even parleying for an instant with a doubt. Flinging off at once all thought of old Vusefræa's intimation, he set with alacrity about making Kenric's preparations for departure, deeming himself happy in the fortune which had ensured to him for so long a time the companionship of a friend so ardent and deserving.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

IN the mean time Kenric hastened to the place of rendezvous. Attached to a degree even beyond that he himself imagined to his indulgent parent, he forgot, for the moment, in the one idea of meeting her, his father, the duke, the lunations, equinoxes, and even himself. A broad moon had just succeeded, and in part displaced the light of the sun (which was already set when he arrived upon the bridge), and cast the shadows of the passengers, who crossed at lingering intervals, in tapering elongation over the surface of the stream. In a short time while he continued walking to and fro in restless expectation, the place became entirely deserted, and favourable for the promised interview.

A figure, wrapt in the Anglo-Saxon mantle, and moving slowly towards the bridge, was the first that fixed

his attention with keenness of interest. He waited, leaning against the paling that served for a battlement, until it approached the centre, and then advancing, said in a low voice :

“ Is it my mother ? ”

Without replying in words, Domnona opened her arms, and they embraced in silence. The joy of Kenric, however, was mingled with a pang of dismal anguish, when, on putting back the hood from his mother’s brow, he beheld the thin and haggard countenance it had concealed.

“ What ails thee, Kenric ? ” asked Domnona, in a gentle voice ; “ why dost thou turn from me, child ? ”

Kenric paused, his mind greatly troubled, with his face bent downward, and not daring to look again into that of his parent.

“ I stole out, as soon as thy father left the house,” she said, “ to see thee, for I dared not to be absent in the day. Thou hast grown tall, Kenric, and stouter. If I were not thy mother, I would have passed thee ere thou spokest. What ails thee ? Wilt thou not tell me some news of thy fortunes ? ”

“ Ah, mother ! ”

“ Well, my child ? ”

“ Thou art so changed, so ill, so utterly wasted, I never thought thou couldst look so wretched.”

“ Do not trouble thyself for that,” said Domnona, “ if I could see you all reconciled again I would be well enough. Vuscfraea, whom I have just parted with, tells methou art meditating a voyage to Inisfail with thy friend Elim. If so, before thou goest, I have some parcels for thee ; some tunics long since made, and hose and a mantle, only waiting for an opportunity to be sent. They would have reached thee in East-Anglia had any offered. They are all thy mother’s work. I thought thine own must needs be worn ere now, and thou hadst no one in

that distant country to care for thee. It was a comfort to me to make them, and to think, as the work went on, that I had only to call thee in and bid thee wear them; but thou canst not think how lonesome I left when they were all finished, and thou so far away from me."

"Mother," whispered Kenric, "you are painng me, although you do not know it."

"What, darling! I am sorry for it. Ah, this was ever thy way, Kenric; thou wert ever feeling and easily touched. I cannot stay much longer now, for Ailred will return about this hour, and if he find me absent, nothing less than the pleasure of having seen thee could pay for the discomfort it would cause me."

Kenric sighed deeply.

"I have been thinking, and thinking, upon this business," said Domnona, "until my brain is as addled as ever a scholar of them all in Ailred's mind. I believe if you could make matters understood, there is none so wrong as the rest imagine; ah, why dost thou moan so, Kenric? Principle, thou knowest, is above everything, and I know thou canst not but be right, or thou wouldst never have held out so long away from us all. Don't let it prey upon thee, darling. Time may cure all, and hope. But do not blame thy father for his views, for Ailred has a great deal on his mind to trouble him, and thou dost not know what reason he had to be grateful to Elfwin. And do not think too harshly of the duke, even if thou deem him wrong; these men of birth and grand estate, thou knowest, are always apt to fight for their own way, and find it harder to own themselves in fault than a poor person. So much the worse for them, thou knowest, my son, and we ought to rejoice that we are poor and humble. Why dost thou moan again? art thou not glad to see me?"

"Well, I must now return—nay, do not leave the bridge till I am out of sight, for it would be a fearful

thing if Ailred saw thee with me, whatever he might say of meeting me alone. Farewell! I will send; when dost thou leave the town?"

"At dawn of day."

"To-morrow! oh, so soon? farewell, my child! I'll send the tunics and the other garments then to-night by Webba to thy lodging. Love Elim, for if he were thy brother he could not say more for thee than he did to Ailred. Once more, farewell! Thy mother's blessing go along with thee, and if thou be wrong, may heaven forgive thee too!"

So saying, she departed, gathering her mantle again around her head, and leaving Kenric in a state of mind different from what he had anticipated from this wished-for interview. Bewildered by a crowd of thoughts, some terrible and wholly new to him, some exquisitely painful, he walked almost instinctively toward the lodging, and would have given much to be once more reconciled to his offended friends.

Elim, who expected to see him return as he had departed, in delight, was greatly perplexed by the absence of mind and dejection which he manifested. At first he supposed that Domnona had disappointed him, but being undeceived on this point, he was compelled, with grief, to attribute what he beheld to the nature of the interview. He pitied Kenric doubly, because the latter, now, for the first time, made no communication of his feelings.

In a little time the arrival of Webba with the bundle of garments aroused his friend in some degree from his extreme depression. He had been so thoroughly miserable under the influence of his remorse, and so penetrated by his mother's words and sickly appearance, that he thought several times of hurrying to his father's house without delay, and flinging himself at the feet of Ailred to implore his pardon. When the bundle came he took it apart, and examined it in private. Elim, who

watched him with some uneasiness, observed, after he returned, that he strove to hide his face during the evening as if he had been weeping, which was indeed the case. The relief which he found in tears took off in some degree the poignancy of self-reproach, and left him more capable of mastering the good suggestions which he had been striving to resist already. During the night, Elin, whose bed of rushes and log-pillow were placed in the same apartment, heard him often starting in his sleep, and muttering his mother's name.

CHAPTER XLIX.

A DEEP sleep fell on Kenric before morning, and when Elin came to tell him that the carriage was ready for their journey, he awoke hurriedly, like one who had lost all recollection of the events of the preceding day. The journey tended still more to dissipate the gloom which had oppressed him, and before they reached the coast from whence they were to embark for Hy, he seemed to have recovered the same degree of animation which he had shown, with few exceptions, since their meeting. He conversed freely with Elin of his adventures since he left his home, and intimated more than he had hitherto done of his life in East Anglia, though this part of his story was always approached with evident reserve. He described the schools of Cair Grant, and dwelt much on the account of his own difficulties on his first arrival, not omitting to do himself ample justice for the energy with which he had surmounted them.

"But the hardest thing to bear," he continued, "was the character of the persons with whom I was at first obliged to associate. To one, you know, accustomed as

I was on the continent (and in this instance the worse for me) to the conversation of the first men in Europe, to the tables of Eginhard, of Alcuin, of Virgil, of Claude Clement, and John Scot, and of others not less celebrated, imagine what it was to mingle with a crew no way superior to the ragged rout of Firbolgs and Danaans, that thrust themselves upon our lectures at Deochain Neassan, in pursuit of the fruits rather than the flowers of Parnassus, looking merely for the immunities of literature, and no way disposed to advance its interests. From the little you know of me, you may judge (without my going to talk nonsense, you know) whether I was a fit companion for persons of that description. And then, one could not be trumpeting one's own praises, and telling people one was this and that, and could do so and so. I know there are persons that can do it, but I don't envy them. Besides, even if the duty one owes to one's own interests were to urge one to say what one was, by some awkward chance it never has the effect. It always looks like vanity, at least they think so, and one doesn't like to be suspected for what is beneath one, you know. Coarse-minded people, when they hear you tell anything of yourself that is on one side more than another, will never be persuaded but you praise yourself. For that reason I always avoid it, and very often to my own serious disadvantage. The malice of men, Elim, is detestable; and if it were only their malice, but their coarseness! I cannot tell you with what anguish it was that I observed after some time the effect of the society I was obliged to keep on my own manner and discourse. Of that, I will only say, without vanity (for you know all those things are nonsense between you and me), but I will only say, the knowledge of courts was not, of course, you know, lost upon me. It was painful then, Elim, to observe the Gallic polish of my own manner wearing slowly off, and to detect in my own habits the same lack of refinement

which had offended and depressed me at the first in them. Even at table, and in our evening meetings, it was with an aching heart I missed that courtesy of manner and habitual minuteness of attention for which the subjects of Charlemagne were most remarkable. And then for one who hates pride so heartily as to sacrifice his domestic peace rather than flatter it, to sit listening for hours to the foolishness of literary egotism ; to sit out an evening among companions with whom a paltry vanity, a foppery of nouns and verbs, were but poorly compensated by a flippancy that was meant for wit, and an exaggerated turn of sentiment and of expression ! Well, they may say what they will of dukes and rank, but honest plain humility is over all."

Elim wondered where his friend could have picked up the strange ideas of duty and of virtue which escaped his lips from time to time, and often censured himself for a strong inclination to smile at sentiments which ought to have moved his indignation. It surprised him, moreover, to observe, that notwithstanding the genuine and deep concern which Kenric had displayed during the evening previous to their departure, he had completed the decoration of his person on the following morning with the care of a young girl. From these follies, however, frequently as they were forced on his attention, he turned away his eyes as much as possible.

In the course of a few days they reached the lonely island of Iona, where Elim found the late Ard-righ of Inisfail employed in tilling a small garden near the shore. Elim presented his credentials, and had little difficulty in accomplishing the object of his journey. The exiled monarch expressed the liveliest delight at the prospective happiness of his early favourite, and accorded his assent without delay. After spending a few days in the island of the recluses, they prepared once more to take the sea.

"Well, Elim," said Kenric, as they stood on the shore,

laying his hand upon the shoulder of his friend, "what an ingrate I should be if ever I forget the events of the last moon!"

He said these words so often, that Elim at length turned round and exclaimed, with a laugh :

"One would think thou wert meditating some evil against me already, thou seemest to dwell upon it so earnestly. Thou art a strange being—one who did not know thee as well as I do, would say thou distrustedst thine own heart. But come, if we stay here debating of our propensities and inclinations, and all the rest about our beloved selves, the tide may leave our vessel."

They directed their course southward until the woody shores and highlands of Uladh broke upon their eyes. The winds blew fair, the vessel spread her canvas to receive them, and the morning of the third day's sail beheld the voyagers entering the mouth of that river (since so fatally renowned), which flowed by the ancient city of Inbher Colpa.* Pursuing their course along the banks of the stream, they were surprised to see its surface enlivened at a distance by a number of coities, currachs, noevogs,† and other shallow craft, filled with company gaily dressed, and bearing banners in their prows of various devices. These ensigns ‡ were marked in large characters, with the words "MacMahon a-bo," "O'Hanlon a-bo," "O'Kelly a-bo," and many other northern patronymics.

Their vessel at length lowered sail on the borders of Conaille Muirtheimhne. § Springing to his native soil, Elim lay down for some moments in silent joy, with his bosom pressed against the earth. Kenric followed, smiling at his enthusiasm, and wishing that he could share it. Turning to an Eremonian fisherman, who, with a piece of horse skin and hempen cord, was repairing his little noevog upon the river side, Elim learned that this gay

* Drogheda.

† See Note 6.

‡ 24*

† See Note 51.

§ Louth.

company were representatives of the various septs from the northern principality of Orghial of the Golden Hostage, who were proceeding to the Feis Tamhrach,* or grand national assembly of the princes of the island.

They passed the night at Slane, an inconsiderable town, where the Northumbrian learned from his friend the nature of the assembly of which the fisherman had spoken.

"The Feis of Teamair,"† said he, "is an assembly of the Ard-righ, the Righs, Aires and petty authorities of the island, which is convened every third year, in order to revise and frame laws, examine the national records, and deliberate on the state of the island. The present sitting, however, must be convened for some extraordinary occasion, for scarcely two years have elapsed since it was last dissolved."

What this extraordinary occasion was, they learned on the following day. Hiring a carbud at Slane, they proceeded in the direction of the Feis. The roads, as they advanced, were crowded with strangers from all quarters of the isle, presenting the most animating spectacle, from their great numbers, and the variety of their costume and equipments. Here they beheld a carbud, highly decorated, and filled with company in the gayest attire; there a carr, laden with tributary swords, embroidered cloaks, copper caldrons, and followed by tributary droves of oxen, swine, or sheep; there might be seen the banner of a chieftain, bearing the device of some Eberian, Irian, or Eremonian sept, and followed by the gleaming spears and plumeless cathbhars of a long line of mounted galló-glachs. Here came a wandering cruitiré, with his silent clairsech hanging at his back; and there a *cleasamhnaigh*,‡ or half-witted jester, amused a merry crowd with satirical tales and pointed repartees.

* Pronounced *Tara*.

† See Note 36. The Feis, or Parliament, of Teamair (Tara).

‡ See Note 37. Jugglers and Jesters.

Stopping for refreshment at the house of a beatach, at no great distance from the royal dwelling, they learned that the successor of Donnchadh, Aodh the sixth, had summoned the Feis, at this extraordinary time, for taking immediate measures against the northern Finn Geinte (or white pagans), for such were the Vikingr named in the language of Inisfail. It had become every day more certain that this island could not much longer escape the visitation of those pirates, and the Ard-righ had resolved on taking early steps to prevent their effecting a descent. It was now the evil appeared of the narrow and jealous spirit of pride by which the princes of the island were governed. Some resenting a trifling breach of etiquette in the mode of summons, refused altogether to attend the Feis; others disputed about precedence and right; and many had insults from their neighbors to avenge, and injuries to redress, which occupied all the forces at their disposal.

It was intended that Elim should, at the approaching Feis, take his place for the first time in the great council of the nation, but he had no expectation that the time would have been thus anticipated. It was arranged between him and Kenric that the latter should remain at the house of the beatach, while Elim hastened at once to Inbhersceine, in order that he might return and make his appearance at the Feis with the requisite state. Without delaying an hour even to visit the royal palace close at hand, the young chieftain hurried back to his sept, his bosom throbbing with anxiety and ardor.

During the absence of his friend, Kenric remained at the dwelling of the beatach, listening to the conversation of the guests, observing the various groups which passed onward to the great camp around the hill of Teamair, and sometimes walking out to enjoy the neighboring scenery. One day a strong desire possessed him of visiting the palace all alone, and mingling, unknown, in its

festivities. Attiring himself in the plain but handsome Anglo-Saxon attire which he had received from Domnona, he waited the approach of evening, and took the road which conducted to the Kempe. For nearly a mile around the hill, on which the royal residence of Teamair stood, the ground was covered with the tents of the various chieftains who had obeyed the summons of the Ard-ri'gh, and Kenric found a difficulty in making his way through the merry multitude and reaching the entrance of the palace. A lofty gateway, thrown open, revealed the brilliant interior, which consisted of a great hall, leading, as Kenric could perceive, by many doorways, to the different compartments of the building. The Northumbrian, meeting no obstacle at the outer gateway, presented himself at that, which, as he could conjecture from the sound of music and dancing from within, was the principal scene of amusement. Announcing himself as an Anglo-Saxon Ollamh, he was instantly admitted, and a scene of splendor burst upon his sight, which rendered him for some time incapable of using it with distinctness. The apartment was of great extent, brilliantly lighted up with a number of pendant lamps, and thronged with chieftains and ladies in the rich and varied costume of their different septs. Neither the Ard-ri'gh nor any of the four great provincial kings were present, but the diminution of splendor which their absence occasioned was more than compensated by a diminution of form. Bursts of music occasionally broke from the harps of musicians placed in different quarters of the room, and these were varied with songs and dancing, while the greater portion of the company walked slowly through the apartment, or conversed in scattered groups. Taking his place apart, at a little distance from the grand entrance, Kenric contemplated in silence the various figures that made up the courtly assemblage.

The conversation of a number of ladies, who sat near

in a group, diverted his attention from the moving crowd. They had just entered from the doorway leading to the Hall of Ladies, a department of the building in which, as in the female senate of the Heliogabalus, discussion sometimes runs as high, if not as warm, as in the masculine councils of the Feis. Debates on costume, and on precedence ; on the comparative sanctity of different religious establishments ; eloquent eulogies pronounced on the sternness with which this prelate denounced transgression, and on the beauty of the pearls which that prince wore behind his ears, such were, for the most part, the entertainments of the circle in the Grianan na n-Inghean. To hear these ladies, one would have supposed that every pilgrim that ever lodged a night beneath their bawn was a model of perfection.

Apart from these, and not appearing to be interested in their conversation, Kenric observed a young woman, in a simple dress, and holding a cruit in her hand, her features half concealed by the large white veil, which, in the usual fashion, was fastened beneath her bosom with a golden bodkin. While the Northumbrian admired the exceeding beauty of the figure, and so much of the countenance as he could behold, a man approached, richly dressed, in a deep-coloured sagum, and bearing the golden collar which announced the princely rank of the wearer. He whispered a few words to the young woman, after which he fell back to a little distance, while she, without hesitation, ran a short prelude on her little cruit, and sang to its music the following words :

THE PHANTOM CITY.

I.

- A story I heard on the cliffs of the west,
That oft through the breakers dividing,
A city is seen on the ocean's wild breast,
In turreted majesty riding.

But brief is the glimpse of that phantom so bright,
Soon close the white waters to screen it,
And the bodement, they say, of the wonderful sight,
Is death to the eyes that have seen it.

II.

I said when they told me the wonderful tale,
My country, is this not thy story ?
Thus oft through the breakers of discord, we hail
A promise of peace and of glory.
Soon gulphed in those waters of hatred again,
No longer our fancy can find it ;
But woe to our hearts when we see it in vain,
For ruin and death come behind it.

It was not the exquisite richness of the voice, nor the delicacy of the accompaniment, nor the feeling which animated both, that fixed the attention of Kenric, and absorbed his whole mind for several minutes after the fair melodist had ceased. It was the conviction now flashing on his recollection that somewhere he had both seen and heard the songstress long before, and under circumstances of touching interest. Unable, notwithstanding his most earnest efforts, to call to mind the occasion on which he beheld her, yet every moment feeling more assured that this was not the first occasion of their meeting, the young Northumbrian arose from his place, and took a seat on a tripod which stood unoccupied, at a little distance on the left of the fair stranger. His barréad and ring were sufficient, in Inisfail, to entitle him to claim equality with the noblest of the Feis ; and he found no difficulty in entering into conversation with the lady. There was, however, in the extreme sweetness with which she heard him, a secret distance, not of pride, but dignity, which, while it repressed, enchanted him the more. There was, moreover, amid all her grace, and the accomplished cheerfulness of her manner, a depth and ease that fixed the attention, and indicated a high-toned character. The longer he

observed, the more convinced was Kenric that he had seen the form before, and the farther was he, at the same time, from recalling the particulars of place and time. As the conversation continued, the young stranger seemed amused by the inquisitive restlessness of Kenric, as well as by his unconscious vanity. Soon after, the return of her friend with a circle of courtly acquaintances, obliged him to retire to another part of the chamber, where he had, ere long, an opportunity of seeing her moving through the graceful and varied figure of the national dance.

It was moonlight when he left the hall of the palace. Thridding his way once more through the still noisy camp of the assembled chieftains, he took the road which led to the dwelling of the beatach, where he arrived at midnight.

On the following morning he arose more thoughtful than usual. After a hasty breakfast, he turned almost instinctively in the direction of the palace of Teamair, and found himself, ere long, in the camp of the chieftains. Looking up to a banner which waved almost immediately above his head, he saw that it was embroidered with the figure of a bloody hand, and the motto, "First in the onset—last in the retreat," announced the ensign of the Dal Cassian kings of Munster. The sight of the banner brought to his mind the morning when he had pointed it out to his friend Elim at the convent of Muingharid. While the recollection was passing through his mind, he was startled by hearing a strange voice at a little distance, exclaim :

"Kenric, the Northumbrian !"

Turning his head, he beheld a young curaidhe, or knight, on horseback, handsomely attired, whom he at once recognised as the person who bespoke the song of the unknown minstrel at the Feis the night before. Approaching the young scholar, with a smiling air, the stranger said :

“It is many years since we have met, and yet I recognised thee almost at a glance. Dost thou remember Artri, thy school-companion at Muingharid?”

The Northumbrian returned the young prince's greeting with a cordial spirit. Having learned the occasion of his presence at the Feis, and ascertained his present abode, Artri rode on to superintend his troops in going through their daily exercise.

For some moments after his departure Kenric remained lost in thought. The appearance of Artri had solved the difficulty which perplexed him. The fair unknown was the daughter of Carthann, whom, in company with Artri, her cousin, he had once attended at Muingharid, in the refectory of strangers.

It had so happened that Elim never spoke to Kenric of his connexion with the daughter of Carthann. This was partly occasioned by the excessive egotism of the Northumbrian, which prevented Elim in their private conversations from dwelling much upon his own affairs, and partly by his desire that his friend should form an unbiassed judgment of his choice before it was made known to him. He had indeed related to him the adventure of the Druid's Valley, but without adding anything of the consequences to which it led.

On the following evening Kenric again appeared at the Feis, and being observed by Artri, was by him made known to Eithne in his proper character.

They now conversed, though still on general subjects, with greater freedom than before, and Eithne did not refrain from suffering the young scholar to perceive, in the plainest manner, the amusement which she found in the curious egotism with which his discourse was garnished.

“The world a ball! and people in the stars!” she said, as the evening drew to a close; “what thinkest thou, Artri, of thy Anglo-Saxon friend's intelligence? It is

the strangest I have heard since I left the Coom, to please my royal uncle."

"Twere best," said Artri, "to answer that by the light of the stars themselves, for the guests are already departing from the Feis."

"I grieve, lady," said Kenric, "that no tongue to-night was eloquent enough to obtain thy song."

"I have few melodies," said Eithne, while her cousin bound a fibula which made fast the mantle on her shoulder, "except those which relate the actions of our race, and Artri is unwilling that their deeds should be celebrated by one of their own descendants at a public Feis, although (without vanity, a thing I hate) neither he nor I need be ashamed of them."

"Thou ralliest me, lady," said the Northumbrian.

"What! thinkest thou I speak in jest of my ancestry?" cried the fair minstrel. "Without vanity, I do assure thee that for four long centuries our lands were held as free allodial tenure by twelve successive chieftains of our blood, son after sire, and thanist after ruler."

"Thou wholly misconceivest me, most sweet-voiced lady," said the Anglo-Saxon. "I did not mean to say that thou spakest in jest of thy descent, but in thy echoing me."

"Sweet-voiced, because I was echoing thee?" said the maiden. "I do assure thee if thou meanest my song, the words were mine, the very air was mine, and for the sweetness of the voice, long ere I could have echoed thee, that too was mine, without vanity, a thing I hate. Fare well!"

So saying, she glided away with her kinsman, leaving Kenric too well pleased to be mortified. He also left the palace, filled with the one idea, and listening in fancy to the sweet song which he had heard, and which haunted him through the moonlight scenery that lay between the Kempe of Teamair and the dwelling of the beatach.

At the grey of dawn, while the last lines of the young minstrel's song still mingled with the dreams of Kenric, he was awakened from his couch by the touch and voice of Elim; springing up in haste, he beheld the young Ithian standing between him and the dusky light, and still in his travelling attire. After the natural expressions of delight on both sides, the young chieftain addressed his friend:

"I have ridden a night's journey before my friends," said he, "to let thee know of their approach. To-day the great national council of the Feis begins, and I, for the first time, take a place in the senate of Inisfail. The ceremonies will be splendid, so that if thou desirest to see the pageantry, thou must cease dreaming. Be ready, therefore, at my return, and I will introduce thee in our company. At present I must return to Macha, who, ere now, is past the boundaries of Meath."

He departed without farther time for conversation, and Kenric, attiring himself in all the elegance he could command, awaited the arrival of O'Headha. He returned ere noon, and entered the apartment in which Kenric still remained, with a countenance of mingled ardour and anxiety.

"Kenric," said he, "I can make thee known this evening to a friend, of whom thou hast heard me speak ere now. Thou rememberest I told thee of the Druid's Coom?"

"Of thy escape from the resentment of a hoary Druid, through the interference of his youthful niece? I recollect the tale. But, Elim, I, too, have had an adventure since we parted."

"Reserve the telling it," said Elim, "until we have leisure for an evening's conversation. At present we have not an hour to lose."

Ascending the carbudh with his friend, Kenric was soon in sight of the hill of Teamair. In the hall he was

made known to Macha, to the aged O'Driscoll and his son, who, with the principal members of the two septs, were awaiting the return of the officer, who had gone to arrange the arms of the two chieftains in their rightful places, and to announce to the Ard-righ the desire of O'Headha to be presented to his sovereign, and to take the usual vows.

Soon after, the entrance was thrown open, and the regal pomp of Teamair unfolded to the eyes of the Northumbrian. On a lofty throne, over which was suspended a flag* of green, with the figures of a harp and snake interwoven, sat Aodh, the Ard-righ, in the crimson canabhas, the crown, and sceptre. Around him, on thrones less elevated than his own, and wearing, like him, the aison† on their heads, and the sceptre in their hands, were the Righs of Mumhain, Coige Laighean, and Uladh; and behind, at a spear's length, the sovereigns of Connacht, the asylum of the degraded Firbolgs,‡ once masters of the isle, but dispossessed by succeeding colonists. Over each throne was suspended a banner with an appropriate device. At a spear's length from the kings sat the prelates and other dignitaries of the religion lately introduced, together with a few chief priests of the aboriginal worship, and after them the Ollamhs, or doctors in literature, or music, sitting, where virtue and learning ought to sit, close around the thrones of power. In fair succession after them sat the curadh, or knights, the aires, flaiths, and other lesser princes; the beatachs, brughaighs, and other smaller proprietors of cantreds, town, and plough lands, whether held freely as *saorba* from the civil authorities for the purpose of charity and hospitality, or from the allodial owners by feudal or by military tenure. Beyond those sat the inferior military officers, and still nearer to

* See Note 38. The Banner or Ensign of ancient Erin.
 † See Note 39. The Insignia of a King of Erin.
 ‡ See Note 40. "Degraded Firbolgs."

the gateway a select number of the artisans, agriculturists, gallóglachs, and kerne, who came in the retinue of princes. On every seat were hung the shield and arms of the proprietor, and the utmost care was taken for the exact maintenance of order, by the enactment of sumptuary laws, which, as in modern China, carried the distinctions of rank even into the articles of dress. Royal, learned, noble, gentle, official, and mechanical, all had their costume allotted in colour and in form, the number of hues diminishing from class to class, from the chief king, who shone in dyes as numerous as the classes whom he ruled, to the poor kerne who sat before the entrance in solitary saffron.

While they waited the moment when Elim was to be presented to the Ard-righ, the two friends conversed on the occasion of the present Feis, the constitution of the isle, the character of its inhabitants, and the cause of that unhappy spirit of disunion, which in so singular a degree distinguished the people of the country from almost all the nations of the world. Many and curious were the theories which Kenric spun, in order to account for such nationalities as this. Sometimes he said it was all owing to the circumstance that Partholan, the first who colonized the country in the year of the world 1956, was a parricide, and that his disordered temperament was not yet wholly eradicated from the constitutions of his posterity. At another time it was the bogs and marshes, at another the close woods. Now it was the rain, and now the solution might be found in the continual west-wind that drove in the saline vapours of the Atlantic, in an almost perpetual current over the face of the country. Perceiving that Elim smiled at these and other equally acute remarks, as supposing them too far fetched, Kenric would often turn and pause to pity his friend for his ignorance of metaphysics.

"I believe," said Elim, "a more satisfactory cause

might be discovered, and one besides more within reach of a remedy than those you have named."

"And what might that be, Elim?" said his friend, in an encouraging tone.

"Bad laws, Kenric; bad laws of property and of succession."*

"And what are they?" asked Kenric.

"In the first place," answered Elim, "the laws of gavel-kind, by which, on the death of every owner of land to a certain amount, the possessions of the whole sept are thrown together, and re-allotted to the different heads of families, according to the antiquity of their descent. Thus no one can ever call the land he holds his own, and the motive to improvement is destroyed. On these occasions, therefore, when the wealthy finds himself reduced to poverty, and the active and industrious fares no better than the indolent, debates and discontent arise which always end in enmity, often in bloodshed. Fathers point out to their children the rich possessions of which their ancestors were thus legally plundered to support the family pretensions of some indolent sluggard, the spirit of discontent becomes hereditary, and outlives for ages the circumstances in which it had its origin. The value attached to industry is diminished, and our kerne in general assume, in the course of time, the haughty, restless, and dissatisfied spirit of their superiors, who are thus compelled to fall from time to time into their class."

"But it seems, nevertheless," said Kenric, "as if the cause of disunion were more in yourselves than in the law, for what can be more admirable than a statute by which all individual interests are sacrificed to the glory of the sept?"

"It has a romantic beauty," said Elim, "but it is false at heart. We must often, in framing laws, consider

* See Note 41. Laws of Property and Succession.

men, not as they ought to be, but as they are. If the world were one great monastery, whose profession was the renunciation of those very passions which form the springs of nearly all the machinery of society, such statutes might be feasible. But the world will be the world as long as it exists, and the directing mind will fail most miserably which seeks to move it with a lever of which it will take no hold, or which uncharitably refuses to do the limited good it can, because it is not able to do the unlimited good which it desires. All attempts that ever have been made to establish a general system of community of property in the world have failed egregiously. It is a dream of perfection impracticable even in single households, with all the force of natural affection to sustain it, and how much more in tribes or nations? It is too much opposed to human covetousness, which is ever selfish and solitary in its tendencies, and covetousness, generally speaking, is a passion which no restraint is able to subdue, excepting a sincere feeling of religion, a virtue which prophecy and experience both forbid us to suppose will ever influence the mass of mankind. But this unhappy law has worse effects than that of the immediate discontent. Strife and envy are fomented between the different families of the tribe, and enmities perpetuated amongst them which it at length becomes a glory to sustain and to indulge. Idleness too is encouraged, for no youth of a lofty name, however great his poverty, will stoop to learn the arts of husbandry or of merchandise, while he is by birth entitled to his portion, however pitiful, of the gavelled estates of the sept. Such gentry are they who disturb the peace of the industrious, and make the country unsafe by their extortions and their rapine. And in addition to this, there is the law of thanistry, in appearance yet more specious than the other, and in its theory one of the most just and admirable systems of succession ever devised.

The plan (as thou art perhaps aware) is simply this; that while property descends in a lineal course (subject, however, to the law of gavel) the rank, the title, and the power of the chief or head shall always remain with the oldest of the stock (a regulation to which my case, owing to peculiar circumstances, forms an exception). By this it is proposed that power shall never fall into the hands of the young and inexperienced, and it removes the necessity for that dangerous bait to ambition called a regency. The power of government thus neither descends from father to son, nor is it wholly elective. The eldest of the name, next to the chief, not only succeeds him at his death, but is proclaimed and known as his successor in his lifetime. The monarch has his *Rioghdamhna*,* the chieftain his *thanist*, and even the clerical prelate his *comharba*, all heirs by blood, though not by lineage; elective, yet only elective from the immediate sept. This shifting of power from house to house is, however, full of difficulties, and it often happens that the son or other relative nearer allied than the *thanist* to the king or chieftain, disputes the claim of the legal successor, loth to behold both the sign and substance of authority depart from his paternal threshold. These are the two peculiar laws of *Inisfail*, and both, in their results, afford a proof of what a deal of mischief very beautiful laws may do when they are only considered in themselves, and not with relation to the natures on which they are to operate. This custom of framing laws, and, because they are good and right, forcing them on a people who are unprepared for them, constitutes in civil policy the same mistake that in religion we term fanaticism. In such cases both the legislator and the moralist, in expecting too much from human nature, are sure of disappointment. It often happens, likewise, that this

* See Glossary.

disappointment changes them from philanthropists to tyrants ; showing how little either true benevolence or true charity had to do with their fine-spun schemes, and that they were, in fact, merely worshippers of their own fancies, and not real lovers of their race. We must often be satisfied to do a little good, rather than do mischief by attempting too much, or fail in our duty by attempting none at all. But the evil of all this, dear Kenric, is, that while the laws remain unchanged, the national character degenerates, and even the good tendencies of the people, their courage, love of enterprise, and other useful qualities, are called in to make their civil enmities respectable, and to shed the light of a false glory around the basest of their vices, a cruel and selfish spirit of revenge."

"If your judgment be such," said Kenric, "on legislators who err on the right side, and seek to force men to their good, what say you of those who take the other course, who make oppressive and unjust enactments, and seek to carry them by manifest power?"

"I say, heaven forgive them!" replied the Ithian.

CHAPTER L.

At this moment an officer advanced to summon Elim to the foot of the throne. He was accompanied by the elder O'Driscoll, while Macha, and his friends of both septs, remained to witness with anxious interest the ceremony of his presentation. He was attired in his full costume as an Airrigh, or tributary prince, wearing round his neck the fleasg, or golden torque, of knight-hood ; a cota* or inner tunic of plaided woollen stuff bound with a girdle, in which was stuck a richly-orna-

* See Note 42. "Cota."

mented scian ; a triubhis striped with the three brilliant colours invented by Uchadan,* the famous goldsmith of Cuailgne, sandal-brogs, and a cochall or mantle of bright green descending to the knees, and fastened on the breast by a dealg fallainne, or mantle-clasp, in which was set one of the most beautiful sapphires that the kingdom of Ciar afforded. The monarch Aodh bent down from the *breas-fhoradh*, or throne of state, † to hear his distinctly-worded vow of true allegiance, ‡ and said, as Elim arose from his knee :

“ I rejoice that we shall have the assistance of O’Hae-dha and his counsel in the present Feis. I am not ignorant of the good it has wrought in the principalities of Mumhain.”

The young chieftain replied by a profound obeisance, and retired to his friends, who in a group received him in a shaded corner of the hall. While he was receiving their congratulations, however, he looked around for Kenric, who was not in the circle as he had been when Elim parted from it. He saw him at a little distance, leaning against one of the wooden pillars which supported the entrance of the hall, and eyeing the scene of happiness with a fallen countenance and a disordered brow. Perceiving that he was observed, he suddenly changed his attitude, and advanced to join his good wishes to those of the rest, with an appearance of genuine pleasure.

“ If thou desirest,” said Elim, to his friend, after those congratulations were over, “ to be present at the council of the Feis, thou must follow me into another apartment of the palace. We did not arrive in time for the opening of the Feis, so that if you wish to learn more fully the details of this triennial pageant you must be satisfied, as we proceed, with my description.”

* See Note 43. Uchadan.

† See Note 44. The Throne of State.

‡ See Note 45. The Vow of Allegiance.

Kenric thanked him, and the Ithian gave the following account of the Feis, while he hastened to the tents of his sept, in order to change his dress for the purpose of appearing in the council.

"The palace we have left," said he, "has been for more than two thousand years the residence of the Ard-rights of Inisfail, being founded, as our seanachies relate, by the invader Heremon himself. It became, some centuries after its foundation, the scene of a triennial legislative assembly, under the auspices of Eochaidh, the Ol-lamn Fodhla, and it is by his regulations that its proceedings have been since directed. It is now the fourth of November. The Feis commenced three days before the first, and I have reason, as thou knowest (though thou knowest not all my reasons yet), for remembering November eve with joy. The first two days were spent in arranging the camp of the chieftains, in visits, and in acts of general courtesy at meeting. On the third, the opening of the festival was celebrated with songs, choruses, and concerts in the open air, terminated by illuminations at evening, and the usual signs of public joy. The next three days were devoted to sports and games in the day, and banquets in the evening. These terminated yesterday, and now the business of the Feis commences. If thou wilt accompany me thou shalt hear a discussion on the condition of the isle, and in the evening I will introduce thee to a friend, who, when I left thee here, I expected to find nearer home."

The Northumbrian again expressed his gratitude to Elim, but in a manner which the latter observed with perplexity. It was not sullenness, or melancholy, and yet partook of both. Elim endeavoured, as they again approached the palace, to arouse his attention by pointing out to him the various portions of the building, and telling the uses to which each was destined.

"The hall," he said, "in which we saw the Ard-right

to-day, is named the Teach Miod Chuarta, or banqueting hall, and it is there also we are about to meet again for the despatch of business, but the doors will be open now to none beneath the rank of beatach. Besides this hall there is the Realta na Fileadh, to which the brehons, seanachies, and filés, have their several apartments : the first to hear appeals from the tributary kingdoms ; the second to examine into the national annals or psalters, to collect those which are made in the different provinces of the isle, and embody them into one great history called the Seanchas Mór ;* and the third for a purpose which can only be appreciated in a country where poetry forms a portion of the practical business of the state, that is to say, for the regulation of the affairs of literature. For in Inisfail, young Northumbrian philosopher, it becomes thee to remember that all are poets, if not by nature, at least by education. Our seanachies record their histories in verse ; our clergy are continually harping ; our bishops, nay our prelates, take their turn ; and even our kings themselves are no strangers to the calling. Yet I remember one unhappy occasion in which a desperate revenge was taken for the very imputation of such a capacity. But such creatures are we, that we cannot bear with even the most ignorant species of contempt. There is likewise attached to the palace the Mur Ollamhan,† a college which once superseded in rank all those throughout the isle, though now that dignity is transferred to the great school of Ardmacha. To conclude, there is likewise one magnificent apartment, called the Grianan na in-Inghean, or the Hall of Queens, whose name declares its use. That building, which thou seest at a distance amongst the trees, is the Carcair na ngiall, or state prison, which, as thou mayest perceive, is guarded by a party of the household troops‡

* See Note 46. The Seanchus Mór.

† See Note 47. Mur Ollamhan.

‡ See Note 48. Household and body guards.

of Aodh, as the palace is guarded by his Laoch-ladh, or body guards."

They had now arrived at the entrance of the Teach Miod Chuarta, and were admitted to the council. The Ard-righ, as before, was seated on the lofty breas-fhora, with his face directed to the west. On his left sat Artri, the king of Leath Mogha, on his right the king of Uladh; before him the Righ of Coige Laighean, and behind the Righ of Connacht. Benches were placed in front for other orders of the state. The hereditary marshal, standard-bearer, and treasurer, had places assigned to them at no great distance from the throne. In the first row sat the prelates of the church; in the second, a spear's length from these, sat the curadh, or knights, as chief of the nobility; and behind this bench, each a spear's length apart, were those of the beatachs and officers deputed from towns and cities, and from the states of Albany and other colonies. Amongst these last, Kenric recognised his former school companions at Mu-ingharid, the Danaan and Fearbolg, together with Rolust the young Scot, while Artri occupied a place on the bench of *curadh* in front.

Elim was conducted to his place, and soon after the discussion opened. The affairs of police and trade being reserved for the regular triennial Feis, the Ard-righ at once proceeded to the business of this special assembly. He laid before them the accounts which had reached him of a threatened invasion on the part of the notorious Loch Lannoch, or Finn Geinte, as the northmen were termed in Inisfail. A sea chief, named Gurmund, had sailed from the shores of Inismore and Gaul (around which he had been hovering for several years), at the head of a considerable fleet, and with the avowed design of effecting a descent upon the coasts of Inisfail, though at what point the attempt might first be made it was impossible to say. It became, therefore, the princes of the

Five Kingdoms, to put all their power into action for the safety of the isle, and it was with the view of inciting them to the necessary measures, and promoting general concert in their adoption, that the present assembly had been called. He regretted, however, that a greater willingness had not been shown on the part of the chieftains to co-operate in a proceeding so essential to the very existence of their native country, and he now called on those who were present to deliver their opinions in succession.

The kings of course were the first to claim attention. The Righ of Coige Laighean declared that his kingdom was good for little else than to pay the taxes imposed on it by the Ard-righs from time to time. In addition to the tax of Ugainé More, which they had to pay in common with all the inhabitants of the isle, there were the particular tributes of Eidersgeol, and the Boroimhe Laighean, alone sufficient to impoverish the country, etc. The king of Uladh complained that he had enough to do to maintain his power against the encroachments of the Orghaillians and others. Artri, the Dal Cassian king of Leath Mogha, declared himself ready to do all in his power, but feared lest the Eoganachts should take occasion to possess themselves of the sovereignty; and the Righ of Connacht murmured loudly against the oppression of his Danaan subjects. The clergy, who spoke next, urged in general terms the necessity of concord and harmony. Artri, the young prince of Leath Mogha, suggested that any chief refusing to contribute his assistance, or making civil war on any pretence whatever in such a crisis, should be put under the ban of the isle, and reduced to obedience by force of arms. It now became Elim's turn to speak, who saw here an opportunity afforded him of enforcing the great alteration he had long been waiting for, and he did so with eloquence and modesty. His opinions were heard with attention and applause. The great defects in the national code which

he pointed out as the radical cause of the disunion they now found so dangerous, and which, he feared, would sooner or later prove fatal to the liberties of the kingdom, were evils which it would take time to remedy, but his final proposition was the one eventually adopted. This was, that the monarch on whose shores the descent might first be made, should be entrusted with the care of repelling the invasion, and that it should be deemed an act of treason to the state not only to make war on his dominions when thus engaged, but even to refuse him any assistance which might be esteemed necessary by the national Feis.

The effect of Elim's address was the more perceptible from the total absence of anything like display. As the council ended, few were heard speaking in praise of his ability ; on the contrary there were many orators of the day more generally admired and more loudly applauded ; but the minds of all his hearers were full of the consideration of the abuses he had named, which now, for the first time, appeared to many in the light of abuses. The real merit of his eloquence was perceived by few ; but he was himself amused by observing that even those who charged it with dulness, for its want of tinsel, had all its details, and much of its very language, perfectly by heart ; while the influence of the speaker became so much the more general, inasmuch as few perceived that he had acquired any influence whatever.

One of those few was Kenric. He had talent to observe with surprise as well as with feelings of another kind the real ability and the real superiority of his friend. He felt still convinced that Elim's natural qualities were not equal to his own, and yet he well knew that if he had had a share in this discussion he could not have persuaded so successfully nor wrought so much good. He looked back to his past hopes and his present situation, to the condition of the Heptarchy, so like in its discords to that of

Inisfail, to the prospects of high influence opened to him by Elfwyn's proffered introduction to the court of Offa, and his own weak and foolish rejection of his fortunes. What Elim now, with his lesser ability but superior virtue, was doing for Inisfail, he too might have effected for his native land, and a dreadful feeling seized upon his heart when he looked back upon his past career, and saw arising in hideous array behind him the prospect of great talents sacrificed to selfish passion.

There was, likewise, another circumstance in Elim's manner which excited the surprise of Kenric. In their private conversation he had always considered the Ithian as deficient in social qualifications, a circumstance which was entirely attributable to the humility of the latter and his own engrossing egotism. But now he was astonished to perceive the real difference there was between them with regard to these acquirements. He wondered at the easy dignity and grace which Elim manifested in situations which appeared to him peculiarly embarrassing, and could not help feeling with surprise and shame that he had hitherto known little of his friend. While these thoughts passed through his mind, as he sat in the corner of the banqueting room at evening, he beheld the Ithian approaching him through a crowd of brilliant guests.

"Come, Kenric," he exclaimed, "I now can make thee known to the friend of whom I spoke. It is the fairy of the Druid's Coom. Follow me quickly and see if she be a fitting heroine for so wild a scene and for so strange a tale."

Flinging off, with a strong effort, the thoughts which had been oppressing him, and resolving to be gay in spite of himself, the Anglo-Saxon, whose thoughts were elsewhere, followed the Ithian with an incurious eye, but started with real delight and wonder when he looked on Eithne.

"What! nimble-limbed and sweet-tongued spirit of the Feis!" said Kenric, "art thou indeed the lady of the Coom?"

"Great reader of the stars," answered Eithne, playfully imitating his manner, "art thou indeed the wonder for whom Elim bid me be prepared?"

"And fairest and brightest of all the stars that glitter," continued the Northumbrian, "sweet moon, but scarfed in mist, like Inisfail's own Dian, art thou indeed that generous Druid's niece? What say you to a trip to the Antipodes? O brightest of all the planets, I could give all the glory of earth, to follow in thy orbit, a poor satellite."

"What means he, Elim, dost thou know?" said Eithne, turning to the Ithian, with a tone of inquiring simplicity. "Thou studieth with him, and thou art more learned than I. Does he flatter or jeer me, which?"

"Nay," answered Elim, "if I can understand either the one or the other of you, you may send me to the Zodiac for a new sign to the astrologers. You know each other, then? How long?"

"The rising and the setting of a single sun," said Kenric. "We met some evenings since at the Feis, fair Eithne sung and danced, and I talked of the stars, and so we parted friends. I told thee I had an adventure in thine absence."

"An adventure thou mayest call it in truth," replied the Ithian. "But I am glad you have anticipated my design, and become friends even earlier than I had hoped."

At this, an officer approached the group, and informed O'Headha that his presence was wanted in the outer hall. Leaving Kenric to lead Eithne to her seat, he followed the officer, and found outside his seneschal Moyel, who exclaimed, on seeing his chieftain, in a whispering tone:

"O'Headha, I have seen him !"

"Seen whom ?" asked Elim.

"The Ard-Drai, of the Coom na Druid," answered Moyel, "whom every one exclaimed against for being absent from the Feis. He is even this instant standing in disguise outside the porch."

O'Headha instantly left the palace, and found indeed Tuathal standing near the entrance, and just using as much disguise as might attract suspicion without effecting the purpose of concealment. His eyes were fixed with so much delight upon a jester who was performing pranks before the entrance of the palace, that he did not perceive the approach of Elim, until he had laid his hand upon his arm.

"Tuathal," said the Ithian, "is it thou ?"

The Ard-Drai started in alarm, and would have fled, but Elim, who was tempted to laugh at his grotesque expression of uneasiness, retained without ceremony the hold which he had taken.

"Come into the Feis," said Elim, "there are friends within who will be glad to see thee."

"No, no ! Samhuin* sees I dare not," said the Ard-Drai.

"And wherefore, good Tuathal ?" asked Elim, smiling, but with an earnest eye. "Why need this mystery in coming to the Feis ? Had not Moyel recognised thee at the porch, thou wouldst have left the palace without our being conscious of your presence. What deep design occasioned all this secrecy ?"

"Design ! deep design !" exclaimed the young Ard-Drai, starting with a frightened look. "Oh, hear him, bright Samhuin—have we a deep design ? Oh, Elim ! Elim ! We came to the Feis—hear the whole truth—
—we came in private—because—because we came in

* See Note 15.

private—for a certain reason—there's the plain truth now ; art thou satisfied ? ”

“ A word with you, Tuathal,” said the Ithian. “ I would advise you to look closely to the ground on which you stand. There have been many rumours at the Feis, respecting the Druid tribes and the Finn Geinte, and Aodh did not suffer me to leave his presence this even till he had hinted at the questionable loyalty of the Hooded People.”

“ O bright Samhuin ! ”* cried Tuathal, looking still more frightened, “ do but hear this ! Disloyalty amongst the Hooded People !* And thou believest it, Elim ? ”

“ I only spoke,” replied the Ithian, “ to place you on your guard. This affectation of disguise, believe me, will do little to remove suspicion, added, likewise, that thou wert wanting amongst the number of those new princes, who, like myself, came forward to vow allegiance to the Ard-righ.”

Tuathal's uneasiness increased.

“ I did not take the vows,” said he, “ because—because—to be candid with thee—I—I—had a reason for it.”

“ I feel thy confidence,” said Elim ; “ use mine as it pleases thee ; and now to talk of pleasanter matters, Macha is most desirous that Eithne should be left with us if thou art bent upon returning instantly.”

Although Tuathal refused this request at first, “ for a reason,” he eventually yielded to the wishes of the Ithian ; doing so, nevertheless, in the manner of one who was desirous to comply, but dreaded a chiding from some superior for his complaisance.

“ Thou sayest the truth,” he said, “ Rath-Aedain is her home, almost as much as Cuim na n-Druadh, and Macha has some right to direct her movements. And yet I am afraid that—but no matter—I have but a small troop of gallóglachs, and she will be safer in

* See Note 15.

O'Driscoll's guardianship, for what is valour against numbers after all ? ”

To Eithne's undisguised delight, this arrangement was completed, and Tuathal shortly after took his departure. During the three days which ensued, Kenric appeared hourly to increase in spirit and in happiness, and it was with sorrow he beheld the morning break, which was to light them on their journey to Inbher-scéine, although he was to travel in the company of those who alone had given the festival its charm.

“ I know not,” he said, as they prepared for their departure, “ to what I should attribute the change in spirits which I feel within the last few days ; but that they have been changed and happily, I know.”

“ Think a while,” said Elim, with a smile, “ and perhaps thou wilt discover.”

Elim was an active, Kenric a passive, thinker ; Elim directed his thoughts ; Kenric followed them ; Elim selected those that served his purpose, rejecting the idle and the useless, while all, in the vulgar phrase, was grist that came to Kenric's mill. What Elim therefore meant by thinking, Kenric understood of musing, and in that sense complied with his friend's wish, while the latter followed the officer who came to summon him into the hall. After spending half an hour in a waking dream, he concluded that Elim meant occupation, but this idea he himself rejected as much too simple to please him.

CHAPTER LI.

TRAVELLING with rapidity, the travellers soon reached the frontier of Shior Mumhain, and from henceforth their journey was conducted with greater rapidity and less precaution. The carrudhs which bore the Ceannfinny and his guests passed on, accompanied only by

the guard of hobbelers, and leaving the gallóglachs and kerne to follow, under the direction of their captains of hundreds and of fifties. They travelled by the sacred towers of Caisil, by the walls of Imleach, and through the Ithian territory of Corca Laighe, from which the family of Elim had emigrated about a century before to Inbhersceine.

As Elim and the Northumbrian preceded the rest of the party by a few days' journey, they arrived, almost alone, in the mountains of the Vallis Juncosa, before mentioned. Descending the steep of Esk, they perceived at a distance a train of about a dozen persons on foot, seeming to follow a single individual on horseback, who, by his handsome attire, and the easy jog of his hobbie, appeared to exercise a kind of authority over the rest. He wore a hanging bonnet or barréad of green, and a fringed robe, with a triubhis of various colours. In answer to Kenric's inquiries, Elim informed him that this man exercised the same profession as old Dubhthach, their own hereditary *dresbdeartach*, or story-teller, with the difference that this stranger, like a human circulating library of extravagant fiction, pursued his vocation in a wandering manner, and was not confined to a particular sept or household. In the ancient Druid colleges, this profession had been regularly taught, and various degrees conferred, according to the proficiency of the student, and his capaciousness of retention. The individual whom they now beheld, from the number of his followers, he judged to be an Ansruth, or *dresbdeartach*, of the second degree, for there were, he said, no less than seven in all.* They were called the *Ollamh*, and *Ansruth*, the *Cli*, the *Caná*, the *Doss*, the *Mac-fuirmidh*, and the *Fochlucan*. When the course of education prescribed to this singular order was complete, it was their custom

* See Note 11. The Order of Poets or Philosophers, in ancient Erin.

to travel thus through the country, under the authority of the college license, from the dwelling of one chieftain to another, where they were received with the distinction due to their rank, and with the welcome appropriate to their mirthful character, and where their entertainment and reward were proportioned to their powers of amusement and instruction. For instance, the *Ollamh*, who held the highest degree, and ranked, in all Druidical assemblies, even before the nobility themselves, was obliged, in order to attain his rank, to retain in mind no less than three hundred and fifty stories of past times, in consideration of which he was entertained for a whole moon with the most hospitable attention, and received at his departure a fee of twenty milch kine. He was attended in all his wanderings by four and twenty followers or pupils, whose duty it was to provide for all his wants, and to lay up in their memories, for their own advancement, the legends, whether fabulous or historical, which they heard him deliver in the various assemblies to which he was invited. A *dresbdeartach* of this rank however, seldom appeared to any company inferior to those who met in the courts of the *Ard-righ*, or the provincial kings. The *Ansruth*, who was next in rank, and retained but half as many legends as the former, condescended to amuse the evening banquets of the *Aire*, the *Ceannfinny*, the *Tiarna*, and other chieftains. He was attended by a dozen pupils, his time of entertainment lasted half a moon, and his fee was also twenty kine. The *Ch* enjoyed the peculiar privilege of an immunity, during the ten days, which was the term of his entertainment, from accusations of any kind whatever. His fee was five cows and ten heifers, and he was attended by eight students. The reward of the *Cana* was variable at the pleasure of the host, but his six pupils were free from all arraignment for debt or any other charge. The *Doss*, whose fifty tales were recited in metre, was recom-

pensed according to the species of composition, and his four attendants were entitled to the same free entertainment as himself. The *Mac-fuirmidh*, whose pupils were but three, received the same number of milch kine for his forty legends, and his period of free entertainment was limited to three days; while the poor *Fochlucan*, last of the legendary tribe, was content to trudge merrily a-foot, attended by his two disciples, from cuddy to coshering, where he retailed his thirty legends (the number which he must acquire before he could procure his degree) for the fee of a single cow or two young heifers. At a period when the luxuries of the newspaper, the magazine, and the new novel hot-pressed, and flying on the wings of steam from shire to shire, were enjoyments yet unheard of, this singular class of individuals were not the least considered, nor the least important part of the community to which they belonged.

By the time O'Headha had communicated this information to his young friend, their carbud had overtaken the *Ansruth*. On the approach of the travellers, he accosted them in a strain of verbose compliment, after the manner of his order:

"Saint Fachtna, Saint Carthach, Saint Brendan, Saint Aedan, Saint Molua the Leper, the holy abbot Saint Eimhín,* and all the other sanctified children of this happy isle, holy, more holy, and most holy, to say nothing of its great apostle Magonius the Patrician,† obtain by their powerful orisons all happiness and grace for the young chief of the O'Headhas."

O'Headha returned a suitable answer to this learned greeting, and they passed on, supposing that they should see no more of the *Ansruth*. As they left him behind, however, Kenric observed the story-teller glance at himself with an expression which afterwards occurred to him

* Latinized Evinus.

† Saint Patrick

as singular, although, at the time, he did not dwell upon it. In little more than a week after their departure from the Feis of Teamair, the household of Raith-Aedain were rejoiced by the sight of their long-absent chieftain.

CHAPTER LII.

INTELLIGENCE having been received that the invasion would certainly fall upon the coast of Mumhain, Artri, the monarch of Leath Mogha, prepared to take the most active steps for their defence. O'Headha was summoned to Luimneach even before the arrival of Macha and their guests, leaving Kenric at Rath-Aedain to await their coming.

In the midst of the delight which he felt amongst his new acquaintances, Kenric no longer retained the slightest shade of the depression which the recollection of his sunken fortunes and forsaken home occasioned. Health, life, and animation returned to his frame and features, and the whole household was made joyous by the lively railery which was certain to take place whenever the Ard-Drai's niece and he got into company. A joyous moon passed over, and Kenric no longer, as he had done for some time before the first interview with Eithne at the Feis, indulged a low-spirited reserve toward his acquaintances, but mingled freely in their sports and conversations, and seemed like one upon whose mind some sunny prospect had unexpectedly opened from the future. Their evenings were now spent, for the most part, in festivity and recreation, and their days in field-sports or in viewing those parts of the coast or the interior which were remarkable either for their natural or historical interest. They visited the floating islands of Loch Cuin-

leáin (Quinlan), the fearful track which winds along the breast of the Druing and Cahirconraoi mountains, the glen of Gleann na nglealt (the paradise of lunatics), and other scenes of interest, which still, from age to age continue to attract the eyes of falling and rising generations.

On the return of Elim, nevertheless, the gaiety of Kenric seemed to diminish. There was a degree of intimacy between him and Eithne, which, though he at once perceived, he could not understand, and without having any definite notion of the state of his own mind, the circumstance depressed and saddened him. The chieftain, however, was for some time too closely occupied in the affairs of his sept to take particular notice of what he considered a part of the constitutional weakness of the Northumbrian's mind.

As they rode together one afternoon through a part of the territory in which Elim had been erecting a line of raths or forts, for the defence of an exposed position near the coast, he endeavoured to enter into conversation with the latter on his favourite topic, the condition of the isle, but the Northumbrian was incorrigibly absent. Elim at length was piqued to notice it.

"It seems to me, however, Kenric," he said, "as if thou didst not take that interest in this subject which I observed thee manifest at Teamair. Art thou weary of Inisfail so soon?"

"I am not ungrateful, Elim," replied Kenric, hastily.

"Longing for home, then?"

"No, in truth. My conscience reproaches me that I think so seldom of Northumberland. Good Elim, question me not. I hardly know myself what is the matter with me, and how should I be able to reveal it?"

"Thou wantest some amusement," answered Elim, 'and I have found it for thee, if thou art willing to undertake it.'

"Let me understand its nature," said the Anglo-Saxon; "whatever it may be, I have little doubt it will be welcome."

"I have been telling Eithne of thy treatise," answered Elim, "and her curiosity is strongly excited on the subject. If thou wouldst read her thy book, thou wouldst, I think, be pleased to find a listener so interested and so intelligent."

"My poor volume!" said Kenric with a smile, while his eyes sparkled with delight at the proposal, "I had almost myself forgotten what everybody seems to have forgot. I am pleased, most pleased, at thy proposal, Elim. Thou knowest I do not love the vanity of such display, but I will tell thee at another time why I am willing to waive this delicacy at present."

They turned the conversation now to subjects of indifference, and reached the Rath in time to join the family at their evening meal.

CHAPTER LIII.

A MOON had changed after this discourse took place, when Elim introduced his friend to the wonders of that subterranean stream, which still flows under the caverned roofs of Ballybeggan. While he pursued his tranquil amusement in the dimly lighted flood, and Kenric gazed on the enormous stalactites which depended from the rocky ceiling overhead, the latter suddenly exclaimed:

"This would be a scene for thy friend of the Coom to revel in. We have lost half the pleasure of the day in not bringing her to share the wonder with us."

"She does enjoy these scenes," said Elim.

"What a gifted mind is hers!" continued Kenric, "what a fervent fancy! what a keen perception of the true and beautiful! what dignity! what animation! what

a ready heart for appreciation of what is really excellent, whether it be in nature, or in science, in what she understands from long acquaintance, or in what she learns for the first time. I assure you (without meaning to boast of my own little work, which you know would be ridiculous of course) I have met few persons more capable of critically judging on whatever little merits it may have. She likes the style exceedingly, but that of course is fancy."

Elim listened in silence, and said, after a pause, in a low voice :

"When we are next alone together I have something of importance to communicate with respect to Eithne."

Kenric heard these words with a thrill of surprise and curiosity. What could this secret be in which himself and Eithne were so nearly interested? A thousand surmises of a nature at once delicious and chimerical arose within his mind. Could it be that Elim's eyes were sharper sighted than his own?—that Eithne—the thought was too extravagant; yet was it quite impossible?

Moyel, who loitered near, and observed what passed between his master and the Anglo-Saxon, approached the latter, and said :

"You know how to please the chief. There are few things he likes to hear more than the praise of Eithne."

"And why?" asked Kenric, quickly.

"Why!" exclaimed Moyel, with astonishment; "why do I love to hear that Meibh is the neatest hand at quern and griddle of any daughter of the sept? Because she is to be the mistress of his house."

"Eithne!" said Kenric, turning pale on a sudden, and staring on the seneschal.

"If thou tarriest in Rath-Aedain for another moon," said Moyel, "thou mayest dance the rinceadh at the marriage feast."

He was silent; and Kenric, grievously oppressed, sat

down for a while on a jutting rock at the side of the recess. Here he was rejoined by Elim, who, after sending Moyel a little way before, said, as he walked homewards slowly with the Northumbrian:

"I owe thee an apology, my friend, for having so long deferred a confidence that ought to have been made at our first meeting. But many reasons urged me to delay it; thou mayest, perhaps, have gathered already, from thine own observation, if not from the conjectures of our friends, that Eithne is to be the mistress of Rath-Aedain."

"I never once suspected it," said Kenric.

"Nay," answered Elim, "do not reply as if I made a charge upon thee. To-morrow we commence the preparations, and Eithne returns to the Coom, in order that the nuptials may there be celebrated in her own paternal residence. Our apprehensions with respect to this invasion of the Loch Lannach are diminishing as time advances, although it is certain that the fleet have appeared on the coasts, and many suspect a treasonable intercourse on the part of some discontented chiefs in Inisfail. But this must rest with time."

Kenric made no reply, but followed his friend in the deepest depression of mind, not unmingled with some degree of indignation at what he considered an undue degree of reserve and want of confidence. In the course of the evening, while all were making merry in the hall, a loud sound was heard from the buabhall, or horn, which hung at the outer entrance of the Rath. Moyel was instantly despatched to ascertain the cause of the interruption, and returned, in a few moments, followed by a grave-looking man of a singularly dark expression of countenance, and his hair and beard as black as a raven's wing. His attire consisted of a green cap of a conical form, the point of which hung down behind, a long cloak, which, opening in front, disclosed a pair of

closely-fitting triubhis, and a sort of hair-covered buskin, fastened about the ankles with thongs of leather. In all respects his dress was that of a travelling scholar, with the exception of the girdle, in which, instead of the Irish cian, there appeared a handsec like that which the Anglo-Saxons constantly wore upon their persons.

Kenric and the Ithian had little difficulty in recognizing the Ansruth whom they had overtaken upon their journey through the wilds of Esk. While the company were perusing his curious dress and aspect, he advanced towards the table, and seemed as if deliberating which of the party he should first address. At length, fixing his eye on Macha, he laid aside his cap and girdle with a look of respectful deference, and said :

“Health to thee, Macha, and to thy son, whose beard I kiss. Shall a wandering Ansruth remain to make the company merry with his store of tales, or shall he pass on to the next bawn to look for more willing hearers?”

“We had store enough already of thy ware for the evening,” answered Macha, “but thou art welcome notwithstanding.”

A place was arranged for the stranger, and Macha, turning to the seanachie of her own house, bade him exert his memory to entertain her guests. The old man seemed to feel a pleasure in complying, and chose for his subject the sufferings of the bards of Inisfail, at the time when that numerous body, having, by the abuse of their privileges, brought on themselves the wrath of the other sovereigns of the isle, were received by Connor, king of Uladh, into his dominions, and protected by his power until the storm had been appeased. The history was given with simplicity and feeling, and few of the hearers refused their applause to Connor, although all agreed that the licentiousness of the exiled body deserved the chastisement they had received.

The strange Ansruth soon after proffered his services,

and finding the company willing to attend to him, related the following anecdote :

“It is now four hundred years and upwards since Fithel, the Ard-brehon of King Cormac, lay on his death-bed, expecting the moment of his dissolution. You may all suppose, my worthy hearers that a man in his situation must have abundant opportunities of coming at a knowledge of the nature of men, ay, and of women too, and you may judge what he thought of both by the story I am about to tell you.

“One morning, finding himself more unwell than usual, he called his son, Flaithri, to his bed-side, and gave him the following advice :

“‘ My son, there are four great errors into which you may be tempted to fall, in case you should succeed me in this office, and it is against these I wish to caution you before I die. My first caution to you, therefore, is never to undertake the tuition of a king’s son. Secondly, never to confide a secret of importance to a woman. A third advice I give you is, to beware how you assist in raising a person of low birth and education to an exalted rank ; and, fourthly, I warn you not to intrust the management of your affairs, nor of your money, to a sister.’ ”

Here there was a general exclamation of disapproval from many of the female auditors, some asserting that he was a slanderous old man, and that it was his own evil heart that led him to judge so harshly of the character of others. The stranger seemed to take no notice of these remarks, but when they had subsided, continued his story :

“ Having finished his counsel, the old Ard-brehon turned his head upon his couch, and died. The son, who was a fellow of a curious disposition, resolved to put his father’s wisdom to the proof, and, accordingly, like other sons in similar circumstances, lost no time in breaking every one of these dying injunctions, one after another.

He took upon himself the education of the infant son of the Ard-righ, and resigning the station of Ard-brehon, in which he had succeeded his father, used his influence in promoting to that office the son of a rustic in the neighbourhood, whose family had been, for some centuries, dependent on his own. Having succeeded in this, he retired, with his wife and his young pupil, to a sequestered part of the country, committing the management of his household, and other possessions, to a sister, whom he had always dearly loved. Having spent some time in this altered condition, he one day determined to put to the proof the justness of his father's counsel.

"Taking the royal infant in his arms, he hurried into the recesses of the wood, where he committed the child to the care of some foresters, with whom he was acquainted, giving them money for its maintenance, and commanding them to restore it to any person who should bear them a certain token from him. He now returned to his wife, who, missing the infant, inquired what had become of it. Flaithri evaded the question, and some days passed away without the child's appearing. The wife now suspecting, from the moody silence of her husband, that all was not as it ought to be, became more pressing in her instances, and Flaithri at length told her (with the strictest injunctions of secrecy) that, in order to forward some private views of his own, he had taken away the life of his royal pupil. The wife, after expressing a great deal of horror at the occurrence, agreed with him that it would be more prudent to keep the affair a secret; and, accordingly, treasured it up in her mind, for a favourable opportunity of turning it to some account.

"It so happened, that, after this disclosure, Flaithri discovered another secret, which had remained concealed from his observation ever since his marriage, though that event had taken place a great many years before. He found out that his wife was not by any means the

submissive sort of woman he always took her for, and, as he was rather fond of his authority, this circumstance occasioned a great dilemma in the household; for strange to relate, they seemed at a loss to know which was head. At length, on one occasion, when Flaithri persisted, in the most obstinate manner, in asserting this distinction for himself, the poor woman, not knowing what to do with him, went off to the Ard-righ, and told the whole story, resolving that, if he were determined to be her head, she would let him know he was not so sure of his own.

“The monarch, distracted beyond all conception at the murder of his child, sent off a party of his Franc Amhuis, to have Flaithri apprehended with the utmost despatch. They found the latter considering in his own mind what it could be that had now kept his wife a whole day absent from his house. At the first sight of the soldiers, however, the difficulty was cleared up, and he shook his head, thinking of his poor father.

“There was no time to be lost in making a public example of so heinous a delinquent; so the Ard-brehon, who was at this moment sitting in judgment in the Rath of Teamair, was commanded to use all expedition in forwarding the ends of the law against the murderer. The latter, to show his great zeal in his office, and his pure love of justice, had the offender brought before him on the instant, making no account whatever, after such an occurrence, of the benefits he had conferred upon himself. He consulted the Breith Neimhe,* or Celestial Judgments (that celebrated book of laws, compounded by Fercheirtne, and his two colleagues, at the request of Connor, king of Uladh), in order to discover what punishment should be inflicted for such guilt as this. Death was the least, and, in memory of his own obligations, he

* See Note 49. The Breith Neimhe.

was weak enough to render it no heavier. The poor convict acknowledged that the decision was not an unjust one, but yet requested a few words in private with his judge, conjuring him, by the memory of former favours given and received, not to refuse this moderate request. But the virtuous Ard-brehon would hear nothing of such leniency. 'It was not so much,' he said, 'for the heinousness of the crime itself as for the ingratitude it manifested towards the Ard-righ—the Ard-righ his patron and benefactor—that he felt disposed to show no mercy to the criminal.' On hearing this answer, Flaithri sighed again, and thought of the death-bed counsel of Fithel.

"The gaoler, observing his depression of mind, and remembering his worthy father, bade him not despair so soon, for there was a report about the neighbourhood that this conscientious Ard-brehon was about to be married to the sister of his former patron, and, perhaps,' added this man, 'her influence might do you more service with him than anything you could say for yourself.' Listening to this advice, Flaithri resolved to follow it, and accordingly wrote her an oraiun, reminding her of their old affection, of the pleasant days they had spent together, etc., and concluded by requesting that she would use all her influence with the Ard-brehon to have his life preserved.

"This message placed the good woman in a great deal of perplexity. She had always loved her brother with an affection equal to his own, for he had always been very kind to her. But it occurred to her that, in the natural course of things, if he were to escape this punishment (than which, nothing, assuredly, could be more just or better merited), he would come to reclaim the property he had left in her keeping, and then farewell, for her, all hope of union with the Ard-brehon. After deliberating the matter in her own mind until it was almost bewildered, on a sudden, the idea entered her head, that

surely nothing could be more proper than to consult the Ard-brehon himself in a case where he was so nearly interested. The latter heard her to the end with patience, and then asked if she had considered well what a heinous crime it was, from motives of personal love, or friendship, to screen a murderer from justice? The sister of Flaithri replied, that the case had not appeared to her in this light before; and, after a little further conversation with this exemplary judge, she hurried away, full of admiration at his disinterestedness, and of horror at the danger she herself had run of being a sharer in her brother's guilt. She sent the latter a message to that effect, deploring her inability (from conscientious motives) to comply with his request, and entreating him, in the most affectionate manner, to use all the means in his power to turn the little time he had remaining to the best account.

“Now fully convinced of the correctness of his father's observation of human nature, Flaithri sent off a private messenger, with the token agreed upon, to the foresters in whose care he had left the infant, requiring them to be present at the place and moment appointed for the execution. In order to render the punishment as exemplary as it was condign, the spot selected for carrying it into effect, was a plain before the royal Kempe of Teamair; and, such was the estimation in which the culprit had once been held, that this plain was crowded at an early hour. The Ard-righ himself had a throne erected opposite the scaffold,* where he sat, awaiting, with a stern aspect, the consummation of justice on the head of the infamous traitor to whom he had rashly confided a trust so precious to his people and to himself.

“At length, with a dejected attitude and countenance, the son of the Ard-brehon was brought forth, guarded

* See Note 50. Executions in ancient Erin.

and manacled as his crime deserved. Having ascended the scaffold, while all the multitude were awaiting the moment of his execution, he suddenly raised his head, and requested permission to address a few words to the Ard-righ himself. This being granted, Flaithri advanced to the front of the scaffold, and spoke as follows :

“ I often imagined, O my just monarch and kind benefactor, that men, and women too, were a great deal better at bottom than the generality of old people imagine them to be, and that human nature was not so strongly inclined to wickedness as we are told it is ; but I have now made experience of the fact, and am thoroughly convinced that, little virtue as there is in the world, there would be less if temptation were still more general than it is. I likewise believe, that he who would think well of his fellow-creatures must not be trying their strength for his own curiosity, for I myself, by such an impertinence, have turned three angels into as many devils.’

“ With these words he related his adventure to the Ard-righ, and concluded his narrative by calling on the foresters to produce the child, the sight of which gave exceeding great joy to the Ard-righ. After embracing the infant, and committing it to the care of a proper attendant, he turned to Flaithri, and answered him in the following words :

“ ‘ Thy father was wiser than thou, and his dying words still truer than thou yet hast proved them. These three serpents, whom thou hast caressed to sting thee, shall be consigned to the misery and disgrace they have deserved ; but it is fair that thou shouldst share the evil which thy presumptuous curiosity has occasioned. Let the whole four, tempter and tempted,’ said he, to his guards, ‘ be cast out from our dominions, and let a crier precede them with a trumpet, to declare the cause of their banishment.’

“ This sentence,” continued the Ansruth, “ was carried

into effect upon the spot, and Flaithri, together with the three ingrates, was ejected from the domain of the Ard-righ, abashed at this unexpected verification of the only portion of his father's dying charge which had remained yet unjustified by the event."

CHAPTER LIV.

WHILE the company were occupied in making their comments on the conduct of the different characters in this story, Kenric observed the stranger fix his eyes earnestly upon himself, and use a secret sign, as if to invite him to a conference without the dwelling. The action surprised him, and his curiosity, always, with him, an active quality, would not suffer him to treat it with neglect. Accordingly, observing the moment when the stranger left the company, he took an opportunity of following him, in a little time, and, finding him standing outside, inquired the meaning of the sign he had made.

"There was no need for me," said the stranger, "to make signs to bid thee follow me when I found thee starving in Cair Lud."

The Anglo-Saxon started back, and raised his hands in astonishment.

"Inguar!" he exclaimed, "Inguar, and in the dress of an Ansruth. Is it thou that comest to call me from the feast?"

"Hush! hu-h!" replied the Swede. "Remember thou art under a pledge, if thou canst not aid, at least thou wilt not betray us."

"May no friend of mine," said Kenric, "ever feel the torture which that pledge has cost me since I came to Inisfail. I am glad that we have met, for the mystery

was burning in my bosom, and I longed to let thee know that I am determined on revealing it."

"Revealing it!" exclaimed the Scandinavian, "betraying it, thou shouldst have said. Betraying a cause which well thou knowest to be a just and good one; a benefactor who has ardently befriended thee, and who would have been still more thy friend if thou wouldst suffer it."

"I deny not," answered Kenric, "the justness of the cause, nor the benefits of Baseg. But I do deny the justness of the means he uses to advance his rights, and the idea that any gratitude could excuse such double dealing in myself. I tell thee I am resolved to make known the hidden spring of this invasion. Let Baseg seek his right by open means, let him seek for justice on this usurper, whoever he may be, from the equity of his countrymen, but let him not endeavour to secure a selfish end by taking part with the enemies, not alone of Inisfail, but of all mankind."

"Thou talkest at random," answered Inguar, "without knowing aught of the difficulties which you would urge the injured exile to surmount. His enemy is now too long established in his unlawful power, his influence too great amongst the princes of his nation, and the number of Baseg's friends too few to leave a hope that anything could be gained by an appeal to justice. But he abhors more deeply than thyself the crime with which thou dost not hesitate to charge him. It is not taking part with the enemies of Inisfail, to use their aid against one who is himself her enemy by holding power in violation of her laws. If thou wouldst but consent to speak to Baseg, thou soon mightest learn to weigh his motives differently."

"What sayest thou?" cried the Northumbrian. "Is Baseg then at hand?"

"Thou canst see him," answered Inguar, "in less than a day's journey. The fleet of Gurmund are already on

the coast; but thou knowest little of our friend if thou suppose that my countrymen, of whom thou speakest so hardly, and yet not unjustly neither, shall ever be employed in Inisfail for other than the justest ends. Arouse thyself, therefore, and say whether thou art willing to be our friend and thine own together, for the affair requires despatch and energy."

He was about to furnish the young Northumbrian with an account of his adventures since he left Cair Lud, and the motives which had induced him to assume his present disguise, when the door of Macha's dwelling opened, and two cloaked figures were seen issuing from the illuminated hall within.

"Come this way," said the stranger, going hastily toward the grove which screened the dwelling toward the north, and beckoning Kenric to follow him;—"let us find a place where we may not be interrupted."

The two persons who had made their appearance at the door of the house were the Ard-Drai's niece and her friend Macha. They walked slowly toward the earthen embankment which surrounded the place, and overlooked the tranquil valley, with its stream and rustic bridges. The scene presented a beautiful though solitary night-view, and had something of the solemn in its serenity. It seemed as if the friends had been conversing already, and had interrupted their discourse, for after they reached the bank, while Eithne stood gazing on the landscape, she suddenly addressed her friend as follows:

"Whatever be the cause of his dejection, I would he were now here that we might cheer it. There is a moon and starlight, after his own taste. He is weak and fanciful, but underneath his folly, I can see some thought and feeling."

"And I," said Macha, "underneath his talent, can see much danger to himself and others."

"I hope thou art mistaken," answered Eithne; "at

all events his foibles are original and amusing, and I shall miss him from our circle when he goes. I shall never see the moon upon the bay without remembering his small treatise, and how he hated vanity. Wilt thou tell me more of his history?"

"Thou must even content thyself with what thou knowest, for the present," said Macha, "for I see the door already opening, and Elim coming forth to seek us."

Eithne threw down her veil, with a feeling of disappointment, and fastened it with a golden bodkin to her waist.

"Have either of you seen Kenric?" asked Elim, as he approached, "or the talkative Ansruth? Why have you all deserted our circle in the house?"

"We were about returning to it," answered Macha, "and so were thy other guests, for yonder I see them issuing together from the grove,"

"Together!" exclaimed Elim.

"Together, it appears," said Eithne.

"That's strange," said Elim, "for I did not think they were acquainted."

"I am sure," said Eithne, "they did not speak to one another in the house."

"But what of that," said Elim, with a rapid self-recollection; "an Ansruth is not long in making an acquaintance. They are often more familiar than agreeable."

They were now joined by Kenric and the stranger, the latter falling modestly behind as they drew near the group. Kenric, who seemed, by some late impulse, to have been restored to his customary foppishness of manner, addressed himself to Eithne, as he mingled with the group, and turned the tassel of his hanging bonnet conceitedly on one side:

"My lessons have not been lost upon thee, Eithne," he said; "thou art of my taste already, since thou pre-

ferrest the light of the stars, on such a night as this, to that of Macha's rushen torches."

"I am of thy taste so far," replied Eithne, in a quiet tone, "and so are Elim, and Macha, and the worthy Ansruth at thy back."

"He!" exclaimed Kenric, "twish! he knows nothing of the matter. He never read a sentence of my book, nor is aware, I dare say, at this instant, whether the stars above his head be carbuncles of Ciar, no bigger than a nut a-piece, or rolling globes of earth, like this beneath us."

"Perhaps," said Eithne, "he knows as much about it as he cares, or wants to know, for any purpose he has of them besides the light they give him on his way."

"Yet scarce so much, thou wilt confess," said Kenric, "as he would know had he perused my little treatise."

"Yet quite as much, perchance," said Eithne, "as the little treatise could ever bring him to believe."

"Thou art sharp upon me, maiden," said Kenric; "but I love to see jests glimmering through the points be turned against myself. Yes, this indeed," he continued, throwing back his sagum over his left shoulder, and gazing, with an affected attitude, upon the skies: "this indeed, fair Eithne, is a night for such a study. In nights like this, it was, that first the system burst in all its glory on my soul! In nights like this have I sat, for hours, upon the roof of my Bavarian dwelling, watching the courses of those celestial lights which (without a boast) I think my treatise (not to speak vainly of it) has fairly demonstrated to be habitable. It requires, thou knowest, some outward stimulus, some excitement to arouse within one—the—(not to talk nonsense, you know)—the thing, you know, that does those things—the——"

"The genius," said Eithne, "I will help thee to a word."

"Tush, but that's nonsense; well, we'll leave it so; we

will not trifle about words; the genius, Eithne. Ay, then it was I felt it stir within me. Oh, Eithne, then my soul expanded! then it became mighty in my bosom, and worthy to grapple with the grandeur of the subject!"

"What a clever man he must have been," said Eithne, "from whom you took it all."

"All what?" said Kenric.

"All that is in thy book," returned Eithne; "the man who taught thee all that thou hast written about."

"Oh, Virgil dost thou mean?" said Kenric, "yes—yes—he—that is—yes. The discovery—the discovery, as thou sayest was his—at least the first announcement of the system in our day—but then, poh—poh! Yes, yes—he had his merit, there is no denying it—the discoverer has the merit of—of—discovery—and far be it from me to rob him of his laurels. Let those who cannot earn them, pilfer them. I envy not their spoils. Ay, Virgil—Virgil had indeed his merit, and well he wore it, for I hardly knew which to like more about him, his merit, or his modesty. He was now, I might say, a truly unaffectedly modest man. He even confessed—averred, I should say, rather—to a mutual friend, that he attributed more of the success of his own theory, at Rome and elsewhere, to my small volume, than to all he ever said or wrote himself upon the subject. It seems nonsense in me to talk of such a thing, but I mention it only as a proof of the man's modesty, for it was that, of course, you know deceived him. It is true, indeed, that others said the same, as I feel bound in justice to confess—but boh!"*

*The industrious Mr. Stanihurst labours to prove that this unseemly interjection was not an innovation of the pale. "There is," he says, "a cholerike, or disdainfull interjection used in the Irish language, called *boagh*, which is as much in English as *twish*. The Irish both in ancient time, and to this date, commonlie use it, and therefore English conquerors call them Irish poghes, or pogh morrice. Which tawnting terme is at this day verie wrongfullie ascribed to them of the English pale." This elaborate disquisition he indicates by the marginal note "*Irish Boagh*."

"I am sure," said Eithne, "thou art very gifted. But where is Elim?"

"Yonder, with Macha, near the rampart," answered Kenric, indicating the place with his hand.

"And there comes thy strange friend," replied Eithne, looking around; "there in the shadow of the house, more near us than I had supposed. Go ask him what he thinks about the moon, for Macha beckons me away."

CHAPTER LV.

SAYING this, she crossed the Rath to where Elim and his parent stood. The latter was still much perplexed by this sudden intimacy between his friend and the Ansruth. Although he believed it possible, as his last words to Eithne and to Macha intimated, that the circumstance might be accounted for by the habitual forwardness common to individuals of that garrulous class, the conjecture did not fully satisfy his mind. Unable to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion, and equally unwilling to leave the subject unconcluded, he resolved to question Kenric on it without delay, and for this purpose drew him back a little, while Eithne and Macha proceeded to the house. Kenric, with some reserve, complied with Elim's desire, and slackened his pace to please him.

"Kenric," said Elim, "do you know this stranger?"

"I do," replied the Anglo-Saxon, without hesitation.

"Because I thought," resumed Elim, after a pause, "that when first he entered the Rath thou didst not seem to recognize him as an acquaintance?"

"Nor did I then," replied the Northumbrian, "but soon after I observed him making a sign to me, which I

obeyed, and he made himself known to me as soon as I came out."

"And who—but it is enough," said Elim, "this is all I had to ask thee, Kenric." So saying, they followed their friends into the house.

The period during which the pretended Ansruth, by virtue of his rank, was entitled to the hospitalities of Rath-Aedain, rolled pleasantly away for the greater portion of its inmates. Inguar was as perfectly adept in all the shades of the character he had assumed as if he had been educated in no other. His stories, though not so numerous as those required in the highest grade of his profession, were cunningly varied, and adapted, as his penetration suggested, to the character of the listener. He did not, however, wait for the expiration of the full term of his entertainment, but took his leave on the sixth morning, at the head of his twelve followers. At his departure, Elim ordered him the customary fee in kine, which the men drove before them down the valley, while Inguar stood without the Rath, to bid farewell to the Northumbrian.

"Thou hast startled, yet aroused me, by thy news," said Kenric. "Is it possible that Baseg is indeed in Inisfail?"

"I tell thee it is so," replied the Swede, "and in the full condition to avenge his wrongs. Whether thou join thy former friends or no, their success is certain; and thou wilt only have missed a golden opportunity of gratitude, without working any good to Inisfail."

"And where is Baseg now?" asked Kenric, after a long pause.

"He is near enough at hand," Inguar replied, "but the common oath by which we all are bound forbids me to disclose the place of his concealment."

"It is not worth thy while to stint thy confidence," said Kenric, "after thou hast left so much in my power."

But well thou knowest, as that smile declares, that it is not I who dare betray thee."

"I do not think thou wouldst," said Inguar, "but I am not disposed to be reserved with thee. In a fortnight hence I will return to bring thee to our friends, and thou mayest learn the whole with thine own eyes and ears; the sum of Baseg's wrong, and his enemy's usurpation."

Kenric consented, and the pretended Ansruth hastened on his journey.

The following day was the softest of a delicious spring, and Kenric sat alone upon the shores of the bay, watching some fishermen, who, armed with harpoons, and seated in their horse-skin curachs, were striking at the huge sunfish which abounded on those coasts in the warmer seasons. Here he observed Elim and Moyel, employed in loosening the little yew vessel in which the former was about to visit a Dun which he had caused to be erected on the island in the bay. The sight of the tranquil picture awakened thoughts of grief and self-reproach within the Anglo-Saxon's mind, and he dwelt long upon the contemplation of his past career, and of the course which Inguar now held out to him.

Perceiving the Anglo-Saxon, where he sat, the chieftain waved his hand in order that he might approach, and said, when he had reached the spot:

"I was about taking Moyel to the island, but since I see thee idle, I will let him go alone."

While Moyel rowed the little coiti,* a kind of skiff, formed of the hollowed trunk of a prodigious elm, away from shore, the Northumbrian stood waiting for Elim's speech, and weighing in his hand one of those ponderous marcasites which still abound upon this strand, and which have been since so much admired by wandering geologists.

* See Note 51. Boats.

"Kenric," said Elim, after a long silence, "I would that thou wert once more in Northumberland."

Kenric started in extreme surprise, and gazed upon his friend.

"And why, Elim?" he asked, with a tone of slight upbraiding.

Elim was silent for some time, and looked upon the earth.

"For thine own safety, Kenric," said the Ithian. "Whatever be the truth of these reports, it is certain that Inisfail, ere long, is doomed to feel the shock of war, and the territory of Rath-Aedain will not be suffered to continue undisquieted in the tumult."

"Thou judgest me severely, Elim," said Kenric, colouring deeply, "if thou deemest that I would so long continue in Rath-Aedain for my pleasure, and forsake it when its sun became overcast."

"Do not misconceive so old a friend," said Elim; "I had on such thought in my mind. There are occasions, I know, in which strangers may lend their aid to the injured party in a civil contest, but this is not one of them. Thou couldst not aid me in the least, not half so well as any one of the heap of able-bodied kerne whom the first day's fight shall leave to fatten the disputed land. Thou wouldst thus be lost to society in one high pursuit, without rendering it any service in another."

Kenric made no reply, but the impression made on him by Elim's generosity was not momentary. After spending some further time in their inspection of the new fortification, they sought the Rath together, Elim for the purpose of business, Kenric to meditate on the scene that had taken place, and to prepare for the approaching trial.

CHAPTER LVI.

IN the mean time, an important alteration had taken place in Coom nan Druadh. On his joining the fleet of Gurmund, near the Thames, Baseg—for he indeed was the wily exile to whom Kenric was indebted for seasonable relief—at once directed the force of the Vikingr to the western shores of Inisfail. Their voyage, however, was not conducted with so much secrecy as to hinder their sails from being descried from many parts of the isle, and hence the alarm which had given occasion to the special Feis. Secrecy, nevertheless, was to be the spirit of their expedition. After they had completed their voyage, and arrived upon the southern coast, it was determined that the Vikingr should keep the open seas in the daytime, and lurk, in the usual manner, in the bays at night, while Baseg went on shore to sound his former friends amongst the Hooded People. The person on whose aid he chiefly depended was the haughty Druidess, Eiré, the mother of Tuathal, already mentioned, who had been his most strenuous advocate in the days of the late Ard-Drai, and whose predilections in his favor were said, by many, to be founded on other grounds besides a conviction of the justice of his cause.

Assuming the dress of a ceannuighe, which he had provided for the occasion, and taking Inguar with him, in the quality of an attendant, the banished thanist left in a curach, the Vikingr's ship, and sped rapidly to those shores which he had not beheld for nearly a quarter of a century. They travelled far on foot, by the light of a pale crescent, before Baseg ventured to make any inquiry concerning his route. It were idle to attempt a transcript of the feelings with which he trod the scenes to those numerous conflicts which had ended in his own ex

pulsion from his native land, nor of those with which he looked upon the lonely Coom itself, all lovely with its midnight scenery. The first person whom the travellers met, as they descended to the bosom of the valley, was an old acquaintance of the thanist. They had almost reached the green at the mountain's foot, when they encountered a figure approaching from the borders of the lake, and muttering to himself, as if in repetition of some charm. On the approach of the stranger he stopped short, and gave the customary challenge.

Instead of answering directly, the thanist advanced until he came so near as to make his person plainly visible in the moonlight.

"Eogan Bel," said he, "is it possible thou hast forgotten Baseg?"

The superstitious dresbdeartach, conceiving that it was the ghost of the Ithian, for whose wrongs the people of the Coom had suffered so severely, without uttering another word, turned round upon his heel and fled with all his might, in the direction of his own house. After a moment's mirth at his expense, the thanist said:

"So much for old acquaintance. Our better course, Inguar, or Ciaran (since we must fit thee with a name to suit thy dress), will be to proceed at once to the dwelling of Eogan, and make our appeal where we may have a chance of obtaining his attention. If none of my old friends be living, we can claim a night's hospitality under our disguise, and consider, ere the morn, what shall be done. I can easily at least prevail on Eogan to keep our secret, if the Coom has changed its character."

They proceeded accordingly to the house of the dresbdeartach, whom they found in the act of communicating, to his terrified household, the wonderful vision he had just beheld. With some difficulty Baseg was enabled to make it appear that he was indeed himself, and no ghostly representative. Eogan Bel, whom he had formerly

impressed with the deepest veneration for his character, expressed the liveliest delight at his return, but gave him little comfort in his answers. He informed him of the death of the Ard-Drai, the impatience which Tuathal daily manifested of their exclusive mode of life, and the present situation of the Coom. After brief consideration of these circumstances, Baseg resolved at once to present himself to Eiré and her son, and bade Inguar follow him in the direction of the Dun. They pursued their way in silence. It happened that Tuathal and the Druidess were seated still beside their hearth, though most of the household had retired to rest. Eithne had, on that morning, left the Coom on the invitation of her uncle, the Righ of Leath Mogha, who wished that she should accompany him to the Feis of Teamair; and Tuathal gave strong symptoms of a desire to follow her example.

"Thou go to the Feis!" cried Eiré, "and with what object wouldst thou?"

"What object? every object!" exclaimed the young Ard-Drai. "Am I never to see aught beyond these hills? Am I an Ard-Drai, or a prisoner? Can I not have the liberty of a poor kern like Duach? He goes to the Feis, while his lord is cooped in the Coom."

"Thou most unreasonable!" answered Eiré; "the late Ard-Drai, weak though he was in suffering Christian influence, was strong compared with thee. Thou wishest to take part in the gaities of those who have enslaved thy race, and sell the remnant of their independence for the gratification of thine eyes and ears."

"I see not," said Tuathal, "why we should make ourselves miserable because they wish we should be so."

"Thy predecessor," said the sharp-eyed Druidess, "would have died ere he had thought of such a degradation. And there was one besides—"

"Ay, now it comes!" exclaimed Tuathal; "I knew

that we should soon have him upon the floor. Old Baseg, thou wouldst say. I wonder much thou ~~didst~~ not make thine own of him when he was in the Coom, he is so seldom absent from thy thoughts."

It is not possible to say in what language Eiré might have given expression to the indignation which this speech excited in her breast, had not a sudden interruption cut short the rising torrent of reproach, and verified a proverb probably not then in use. It was the sound of a horn at the bridge, followed by the challenge of a sentinel. In a short time, Eimhir, the archer, appeared at the entrance of the Dun, to announce the approach of two Druid ceannuighes, who claimed repose and entertainment for the night.

"They are late, but welcome," was the answer of Eiré. "Banba, prepare refreshments for the strangers, and let Géidé and Fiacha strew two couches of dry rushes in the common sleeping-room"

Baseg and Inguar now appeared at the threshold, and were received with hospitality. The lapse of time, and the total change from the bloom of manhood to old age, assisted the design of Baseg in avoiding, for a time, the recognition of Eiré, until a long course of conversation had enabled him to discover that he might, with perfect safety, reveal his real name. He took an opportunity of doing so when the young Ard-Diaí was absent from the building. The announcement was received by Eiré with the most enthusiastic joy. Still greater was her delight when she learned the object of his re-appearance at the Coom, and the prospects which he had of re-establishing his claim to Gormadark and the title of O'Haedha. She listened with pleasure to his accounts of the warlike character of his new allies, and at once engaged to use her utmost influence in forwarding his views. Tuathal now was introduced into the conference. For him, any thing of novelty was certain to have allurements, and his friend

ship was entirely gained when it was proposed that he should be gratified in his desire of proceeding to the Feis, in order to collect what information was afloat with regard to the designs of the Vikingr's fleet.

In the mean time, it was determined that Baseg and Ingvar should continue private at the Dun, while Eiré exerted the deputed authority of her son to maintain a vigorous exercise of military discipline, a quality in which, to do Tuathal justice, he had taken care that his sept should not be deficient. Secrecy was still to be the moving principle of Baseg's plans, and this was impressed on Tuathal at his departure. How he observed it has been already seen. After his interview with Elim, before the entrance of the palace, he did not deem it safe to remain any longer in the precincts of the Kempe, but reaching the small troop which he had left beyond the frontiers of the royal demesne, at once gave orders to return with speed. As the boundaries of Meath receded from his view, the young Ard-Drai began to feel more anxiety respecting the probability of Baseg's not approving the step which he had taken in leaving Eithne—over whose movements, as a subject, he had lawful control—in the hands of the Ithians. Totally incapable as he was, however, of forming any scheme to avert what he dreaded, he only endeavoured to divert his mind from the idea of it, by calling on Eogan Bel, his old seanachie, to supply him with a song or story.

"Since thou leavest the choice to myself," said Eogan, with a smile, "I will abide by the common opinion, which says, that the song is for the hall, and the story for the road, though both are excellent anywhere."

So saying, and making his hobbie take a softer pace, while he laid his finger musingly against his brow, he called to mind the following narrative, which he related, in a voice loud enough to be heard by the whole party, as they journeyed over the dreary and uneven road :

THE CLOAK OF DUNLAING.*

"You all have heard, I dare say, my worthy companions, of Goll Mac Moirni, and of the famous fight of Magh Lena, not far from where we ride, and perhaps the name of Dunlaing, a champion scarce inferior to himself in valour, stature, honour, and descent, may have reached your ears. If Goll were able to ford the Shannon at the flood, Dunlaing could follow at the ebb; and if Goll killed sixty heroes to his share in a morning, Dunlaing came little short of the half hundred.

"Well, worthy children of Mogh Ruith, it so happened, that on the eve of the famous battle of Magh Lena, this Dunlaing came to the neighbourhood, in order to assist his prince and chief. As he galloped along in haste, for he had been absent from the Clanra Moirni for some days, and Goll was wondering where he could be tarrying, an aged woman suddenly appeared upon his road, and charged him to halt, on peril of his life. He drew up his horse, and asked her what she wanted.

"Don't you know me?" says the woman.

"Why wouldn't I know my fosterer?" said Dunlaing.

"If I be your fosterer then," said the woman, "heed my word. Do you go to-morrow to the fight of Magh Lena?"

"Is Goll," said the hero, "to be there, and is Dunlaing to be absent?"

"You are bent on going, then, I see," said the woman.

"Go I will," said Dunlaing.

"Well, children of Mogh Ruith, not to make their talk as tiresome as our own, the woman bade Dunlaing tarry at least until she could learn his fate for him. He

* (Or Dowling) O'Hartigan

gave his consent, and she bade him ride softly up to the summit of a neighbouring hill, while she sat looking on a broken cloud, and to bring her word what he should see.

"He went as he was bidden, and returned saying:

" 'I saw a woman, dressed in scarlet, and with ornaments of gold.'

" 'Thou hast seen a fatal sign,' said the woman, shaking her head. 'Ascend that hill on the east, and see if thou art promised better luck.'

"He went, and returned.

" 'I saw,' said he, 'a woman, dressed in yellow, and with silver ornaments.'

" 'The vision is more fatal than the other,' answered the woman, still keeping her eye upon the broken cloud, which parted every instant more and more. 'Again, Dunlaing, ascend that hill to the north, and tell me what thou seest.'

"Again Dunlaing went, and once more returned to where the diviner sat.

" 'I have seen nothing,' said he 'but the grass-grown cairn, through which the wind whistles on the summit.'

" 'The cairn is the sign,' said the woman, 'and the most fatal one of all. Thou diest to-morrow if thou go to the fight of Magh Lena.'

" 'It is settled, I must go,' said Dunlaing; 'so, unless thou hast some means of averting the omens, thou dost but waste thy time.'

"The woman remained silent for a while, and then, taking up the cloak which she bore upon her arm, she handed it to Dunlaing.

" 'Wear this around thee in the fight,' she said, 'and it will serve thee better than thine armour.'

"Well, excellent hearers of the Coom, what think you was the property of this cloak? Its power was such that it made the wearer invisible, and so very invisible, that

on his return that night to his own home, which lay near the field of action, his very pigs, although they say that animal can see the wind, could not see Dunlaing.

"On the following day, Dunlaing, hid in his cloak was fighting manfully by his chieftain's side, who wondered from whence the havoc proceeded which he witnessed all around him. Once, when a huge giant, being seven and twenty feet in his brogs, was about to cleave the prince's head in two with his battle-axe, that office was performed for his own by some invisible weapon. At another time, when Goll had swung his own huge battle-axe in air to crush a troublesome *Dal Cais*, the man was mowed from the field before the blow descended. At length the hero paused, and, gazing around him, exclaimed to his followers:

" 'These must be the blows of Dunlaing, and yet I do not see the man.'

"When he had said these words, he heard a voice, which seemed that of Dunlaing, exclaiming aloud :

" 'It were shame for Dunlaing if he owed safety to a covering which deprives his chieftain of the pleasure of seeing him fighting by his side!'

"Saying this, he flung aside the cloak, and, grieved am I to say, children of *Mogh Ruith*, that, in appearing before the eyes of Goll, he received an arrow in the neck, which left him dead upon the field."

CHAPTER LVII.

By the time the seanachie had come to a conclusion, the cross-road was in sight, where stood one of those places of entertainment in which the whole party was to spend the night; and Tuathal, leaving his men to see all in

order for the evening, retired, weary and anxious, to the apartment where he was to rest.

The sleeping, as well as dining rooms, in the houses of the beatachs, were common to all strangers. This, in which now the Ard-Drai sought repose, was furnished with a score of rush beds, several of which were already occupied by sojourning travellers. The floor was the hard clay, and the couches themselves consisted of nothing more than rushes shaken down upon it. As Tuathal lay awake, he heard a conversation pass between some of those already couched in the farther end of the apartment, which added much to the alarm he had already suffered from Elim's intimations at the Feis.

"For my part," said one, "if it be not the beginning of a new colony in the isle, I have no skill in the chronicles. A village where I sold peltry, but a moon since, is already peopled by the Finn Geinte."

"They say," observed a fat brughaidh, who lay on his back, attending to what was said, "that some septs have conspired to help them into the interior; and a neighbour of mine, who sometimes crosses the crags of Gleannamhnach for red-deer skins, avers, that he saw the Raven standard, planted on a hillock, near the southern coast."

"If it be so," exclaimed a third, "it is time for peaceful men to look about them. It was not for nothing the shower of blood was seen at Magh Laighean."

"Since thou speakest of potents and prodigies," said the brughaidh, "I may tell thee of a prodigy under thine eye at this moment. This house thou stoppest in now has the reputation of being troubled with unearthly visitors."

"Thou dost not say it!" exclaimed Tuathal, incautiously, for the legends of his native valley, operating on a character not naturally strong, had added to his other foibles an excessive degree of superstition.

"I can but tell thee," returned the brughaidh, "what

efel a near acquaintance of a friend of mine, beneath this very roof. He heard and laughed at the same tale that I tell thee, and went to rest as near, as near as I can judge by the sound of thy voice, in the bed which thou now occupiest. In the morning, to his utter astonishment, he found himself with his head in the place where he had left his heels, and his heels in like manner put for his head. He made all sorts of inquiries, but he might as well have set about sounding Loch Cuinleáin, where the islands float, they say, for want of a bottom."

"I would," exclaimed a hoarse and grumbling voice, in a distant corner of the apartment, like that of one unwillingly awaked from rest, "that the tongues of all talkative ceannuighes, that break the rest of drowsy travellers, were floating on Loch Cuinleáin also. Does no one consider how far it is to the next walled town?"

This rebuke lowered the conversation to indistinct whispers, and finally to perfect silence; but enough had been said to keep Tuathal on the watch all night. Whenever he attempted to doze, a pair of hands seemed darting down to serve him like the friend of the brughaidh. Towards midnight, while he was still keeping a keen look out from side to side, and wiping the perspiration from his brow, he saw the hurdle door open, and a man enter, bearing in his hand a splinter of bog-pine lighted. Tuathal rose aghast upon his elbow, unable, through fear, to waken his companions, and staring on the new comer, who, wrapt in a long dark cloak of the frieze of Ciar, and fixing full his eye upon himself, approached the couch on which he lay. Perceiving the Ard-Drai at length preparing to raise an alarm, he lifted one finger by way of caution, and smiled.

"O fair Samhuin!" exclaimed Tuathal, much relieved, "is it thou, dear Inguar?"

"The same," replied the stranger, speaking low. "the thanist was uneasy at thy stay, and bade me hurry on the road to meet thee."

"And why, good Inguar," said the Ard-Drai, anxiously. "Has anything happened at the Coom?"

"Not yet," said Inguar, whispering, "but the alarm is spreading, and he feared lest it might reach the ears of Aodh in time to have thee intercepted on the way. Is Eithne in the house?"

"I left her," replied Tuathal, with some hesitation, "at the Feis, under the guardianship of some friends."

"I am sorry thou hast done so," said Inguar. "The thanist will be sorely disappointed, for he held it of the utmost importance that Eithne should be detained for the present in her native valley. Thou knowest how powerful a hostage she would be, if report speaks truth, to work upon the Ithian, in case of his refusing to give up his usurped possession."

"Then," exclaimed Tuathal, raising his hands in terror, "I am a lost man, Inguar, for it was in the hands of Elim and his friends I left her."

"Hush! do not speak so loud," said Inguar, "that was indeed unfortunate. I know not how it can be mended now, for the alarm may, by these means, reach Rath-Aedain, and then, farewell contrivance."

"But what is to be done?" said Tuathal, still distressed. "I dread the rage of Baseg. One would suppose, to hear him storming in the Dun at times, that he was the Ard-Drai, and not I."

"We will find means to appease him, ere we re-enter the Dun," replied Inguar; "and now, Ard-Drai, rise and follow me. We have not a moment to lose, and thy troops are already caparisoned upon the road. I took care of that before I came to wake thee."

"Samhuin keep me tranquil," said the Ard-Drai. "I resemble more a brogless daltin than the chieftain of the Coom. Not only Baseg, whom I fear from his long head alone, though, if he look not well to what he says, he may find my brazen gen a little longer, but even his creatures

thrust themselves into my office of command. How dared you send my gallóglachs to horse without my orders?"

Inguar made some trifling excuse, which he hardly waited to conclude, when he urged the Ard-Drai to hasten forth and head his troop, as mischief might come of his delaying now to chide. The latter consented, murmuring much at the intrusive temper both of Baseg and his follower.

After travelling all day at a rapid pace, they entered, towards evening, the famous city of Cill Dara. The troop of gallóglachs, increased, since Inguar joined them, to a considerable number, encamped without the gates; while Inguar and Tuathal, accompanied only by their daltins, rode on towards the dwelling of a beatach, whose windows looked toward the cathedral church. It was the eve of a festival, and the streets were crowded with people, thronging to and from this celebrated building, distinguished throughout Europe by the splendour of its interior decorations, but more than all by the celebrity of its foundress. The strong light, which was thrown from the edifice by the many rushen torches burning within, produced an effect which brought forcibly to Inguar's mind the night on which he had first been introduced by Kurner to the interior of the famous temple of Upsal.

Leaving Tuathal to order refreshments at the beatach's, Inguar stole out alone, and filled with the remembrance of Sitheod, to view this edifice, of which he had heard so much, even in the most distant towns of Inismore.

"Proud walls!" said he, as he gazed upon the building, "you shall be humbled too! Detested southern race, the blood of the Cimbri was not all shed upon the chariot-spokes and wagons at Verceil! Many a fair southern clime has learned already how full and strong it beats in the hearts and limbs of their northern progeny. And

thou, too, beautiful and gifted isle, thou, too, shalt feel the Vikingr's foot of mail upon thy breast, and tremble at the Scandinavian battle-axe, That worship thou abhorrest shall occupy thy temples; and Odin, he whom the doctors of the south denounce as a fugitive impostor, that Scythian Sigge, whom you would lower to a human cheat, the creature of the wretched Mithridates, shall soon compel thy children to reverence, as he is revered in Sitheod, the Supercilious and the Incendiary."

He returned to the beatach's, contrasting in his mind the scene of peace which he had just beheld, with those which were so soon about to follow, and contemplating with triumph the approaching day, when the Head of Mimer might issue oracles from the shrine of Connla, and the warlike deities of the Scandinavian worship possess the places occupied at present by the effigies of the departed members of this peaceful sect; by idols to adore, not images to commemorate.

On the following morning, Tuathal and his gallóglachs were early on the road, and, with little farther adventure worth relating, arrived in the mountains of Gleannamhnach. It was night before they rode into the Coom, and they found the Dun surrounded by armed gallóglachs and kerne. Tuathal entered the dwelling of his predecessors, dreading to meet, notwithstanding his consciousness of actual power, the anger of a man so much his superior in capacity as Baseg.

The latter, meanwhile, expected the arrival of the young Ard-Drai with the utmost impatience. It was only after his departure to the Feis, that he had heard the rumour of the approaching alliance between Eithne and the present ruler of Rath-Aedain, and his politic brain could not but see the importance of retaining possession of her person. His knowledge of the pliant temper of Tuathal made him fear a thousand chances might

arise to wrest her from his care; and, as it proved, his fear was not unfounded.

On entering the Dun, the first object on which Tuathal's eye reposed was the figure of the thanist, standing in the midst of the apartment, distinguished by its extraordinary bulk and height, the mass of snow-white curly hair surrounding a forehead unusually prominent, and a face, large of feature, and singularly expressive of subtlety and vindictiveness. He welcomed Tuathal with delight, but used no effort to conceal his disappointment when he heard that Eithne had been left behind. He rebuked him with little emotion, but with the utmost severity, and only abated the quiet insolence of his language when Tuathal's patience seemed about to fail him. In this dilemma, Inguar interposed his adroit capacity, and proposed that he should travel to Rath-Aedain in the popular character in which he has been seen amusing the inmates of that household. His residence in the Coom would not have been sufficient to enable him to undertake a task so full of jeopardy, but for a circumstance which gave him no less surprise than joy. In making the first steps towards acquiring a perfect knowledge in the written language of the country, with which, as it was spoken, his long intimacy with Baseg had already rendered him familiar, he discovered that it differed little from the Iraketur, in which he had been instructed by the Magus, Kurner, and in which he wrote the runes* for the fortune-seekers of the city. It has already appeared in what manner he carried his plan into execution. Nothing, however, could exceed his astonishment, well-mastered as it was, on beholding Kenric, whom he had left in the city of Cair Lud, returning from the Feis in the same carbud with the young Ithian chief. That he, whom Baseg and himself had, in another country, been labour

* See Note 52. Runes.

ing to make a party in their plot, should thus, upon their very arrival in Inisfail, appear, as if by magic, by the very side of him against whom it was directed, was an enigma for which even Inguar's ingenuity could find no solution. The first idea which occurred to him was, that the Northumbrian, subsequently to their parting, had discovered the whole of their designs, and had betrayed them for his own advantage. The motive seemed against his character, and yet what other inference could be drawn? To ascertain the truth, Inguar resolved to postpone, for a time, the making his appearance at the Rath; and to employ the interval in striving to learn the cause of this extraordinary conjunction. It was fully explained, when he understood that Kenric and Elim had been school-fellows in boyhood, and that the latter had only within the last moon arrived from Inismore. Yet the danger was great that the renewal of their intimacy might occasion an unconscious betrayal of the design they had in hand, although it was true that Kenric's solemn promise was engaged to secrecy. Not being aware how nearly Elim was concerned in the transaction, nothing appeared more probable than that he might inadvertently suffer circumstances to escape him which would be amply sufficient to excite the suspicions of the Ithian. In this predicament there seemed but one course to be pursued, and that a desperate one. This was, immediately to obtain admission to the Rath, to seek an interview with the Northumbrian, and if it should not be possible to prevail on him to aid their cause, at least to enforce a strict observance of the pledge of secrecy he had given. His twelve followers, who, though figuring as the peaceable pupils of an ansruth, were some of the hardest of Tuathal's kerne, were provided, underneath their woollen tunics, with scians and sharp-edged gens, so that, even in case of a discovery, the Ansruth stood little risk of personal danger.

Having succeeded in obtaining the consent of Kenrie to give an interview to Baseg in his place of concealment, Inguar returned exulting to the Coom, driving before him, under cover of the night, the present of kine which he had obtained from the liberality of Elim. In the dusk of morn, as Baseg and Tuathal walked together on the borders of the lake, they observed, with astonishment, a herd of kine, descending the pass between the mountains, and followed by the Ansruth on horseback, and his men on foot. The cattle lowed as they entered the strange retreat, and were answered by the numerous herds that were waking to their daily pasture, along the mountain sides and in the vale.

"Hail to O'Headha ! most potent chief of Gormadark, I greet thee," said the Swede, in a low tone, as they met.

"How now, good Inguar," said the thanist, "was it to drive kine we sent thee to Rath-Aedain?"

"Great chief," said Inguar, "shall a man pursue his calling and not have his fees? These kine are mine by the most peaceful means. My worthy and intelligent pupils, of whom, from this day forward, I confer the honourable degree of Fochlucan,* can tell thee how they were obtained."

Much mirth was excited by the announcement that the cattle were a gift from Elim to his unsuspected enemy.

"Thou shalt have ample compensation, Inguar," said the thanist. "Meanwhile, I take these kine as earnest of the more important rights I seek to obtain from that usurper. Let them be slain without delay, and conveyed by trusty hands to the fleet of Gurmund."

* See Note 11.

CHAPTER LVIII.

THE Swede communicated to the thanist, without loss of time, the particulars of his journey, and of its success. Gratified as Baseg was to learn that the secret spring of the invasion was still entirely unsuspected, his astonishment even exceeded that of Inguar on hearing that the Northumbrian was at Rath-Aedair, and that he had consented to a meeting with himself. There was no doubt that Kenric would not take such a step without using the necessary precautions to secure himself against stratagem, but even if this were not the case, he had nothing of violence to apprehend at the hands of Baseg. The thanist's real feelings toward the Northumbrian were those of friendship and attachment; one of those unaccountable predilections to which human minds, however stern and ill-regulated, are frequently accessible, and more especially towards those who have once become the objects of their kindness.

The subtle glance of Inguar, however, on the first evening of his sojourn at Inbherscene, had discovered the existence of a new influence, by which he yet might hope to work on Kenric's resolution. His growing attachment to the daughter of Carthann, though a secret to himself, did not long remain so to the observant Swede.

Nothing was yet known, though much had been suspected, in the Coom, of the approaching union; for Duach, the only person who had obtained a glimpse into the secret, preserved it with fidelity.

In the mean time, the day was fixed on which Eithne was once more to bid adieu, though but for a short space, to the valley of Rath-Aedain. It had been privately arranged, that Elim should proceed in state, immediately

after her arrival in the Coom, to make in public the suit which he had already gained in private; and Kenric was now formally admitted by Elim to the family confidence. He bore his part with tolerable spirit; rallied Eithne with even more than his accustomed liveliness; congratulated Macha and his friend with a fervour that was new to his manner, and then hurried from the dwelling to some solitary place, where he might indulge, without restraint, the tide of strange and mingling feelings that hurried him along. Directing his steps to the sea-shore, as if he felt that the prospect of the wide expanse of ocean might give relief to the tumult in his breast, he arrived ere long before the cottage of Clothra, where Elim, in his childhood, had so narrowly escaped the snare of Baseg.

Here, seated in the sunset, beneath a lofty elm, he remained for a long time, musing on the happy fortune which awaited Elim, and on his own doubtful course. As is customary, he felt the awakening struggles of one passion dispel the charm which he had hitherto found in another, and one year of domestic happiness seemed now to him of more worth than the renown of nations and of ages.

"Why is this?" he said, in a mournful tone. "What is it thus turns all my hopes and projects into woe and disappointment? It is not so with Elim; even when he is mistaken, his happiness remains unaltered; his mind is always even and serene; affliction seems turned to sweetness when it falls on him; nothing appears to thwart the still augmenting prosperity of his career. Yet let me not deceive myself, it is the fault of my own breast, the error of my own inconstant and ambitious heart, that crosses all my fortunes. The happiness that seems easy of attainment I disregard, and it is only when it begins to fly my reach that I see my folly in not seizing it. Some friend, some guiding genius, come to tell me when I ought

to take, and when neglect, the occasions that my fortune offers !”

While he spoke, the lengthened shadow of a man was cast, from behind him, along the sward on which he sat. Starting at the thought that he might be overheard, he looked over his shoulder, and beheld, standing on a high ridge of earth between him and the setting sun, the individual whom he had come here to seek.

“What! Kenric,” said the Swede, “thou art true to thine appointment.”

“We are punctual, both,” replied the scholar. “Well, what of Baseg?”

“Hush! speak that word below thy breath,” said Inguar. “Did I not warn thee that our hope still lay in secrecy? The usurper holds his court within our neighbourhood, and should our movements be revealed, ere our plot is ripe for action, ’twere better we had staid in Inismore. But hasten now, for there is not a moment to be lost; I have two horses ready, near the mountain road, and we shall be in the place by moon-rise if we use despatch.”

“My friends,” said Kenric, “must first be apprised of my intention to remain so long away from them. Farewell, awhile; go thou to the place of meeting, and I will join thee shortly.”

Inguar departed, and before the twilight had entirely faded from the horizon, once more beheld the Northumbrian descending the craggy road which wound through the vale of Rath-Aedain. They mounted in silence, and rode rapidly onward, accompanied by their wild-haired daltins, through the mountain passes, into which Elim had once pursued the thanist of the Coom. The night and the succeeding day passed over, and nothing was seen of Kenric at Rath-Aedain, although he had named the following forenoon as the utmost limit of his absence.

CHAPTER LIX.

IT WAS the deep noon of a bright star-lit night, when Kenric, his bosom filled with a thousand strong emotions, rode, for the first time, into the Coom na n-Druadh. On the way, Inguar had taken occasion to make him gradually intimate with the nature of the projected enterprise; the degree of power and wealth which all who shared in its success were to enjoy; the nature of the cause itself, and of the means by which it was to be advanced.

"If we succeed," concluded Inguar, "we possess all that can make life worth holding—love, power, and affluence. If we should fail, the Father of Battles, who loves to see good blows, will reward us in his palaces, the abodes of the valiant dead. There shall we eat our fill of Serimner, the great boar, which cook Andrimner lays at eve before the heroes, as perfect as if it had not been consumed at morn. There shall we see the Incendiary, who sends showers of arrows into the fight, sitting alone at table, and nourishing his wolves with the food which he requires not himself, for the hot and maddening wine is all his diet. Here, too, shall we behold Hugin and Mun-sien, the great ravens, sitting on his shoulder, and croaking in his ears, at feasting time, the tidings they have gathered on earth throughout the day."

Kenric listened for some time in silence to these anticipations, wondering to see that, with all the acute talent of the Swede, his long residence in Europe, and his obligations to many of its inhabitants, his hatred of its manners and its doctrines continued as inveterate as if he had never left Sitheod.

"Peace, Inguar!" he exclaimed, at length, "and tell me what fair vale is this?"

"It is the possession of a chieftain friendly to our cause," replied Inguar.

Both simultaneously reined up their steeds to gaze upon the quiet star-lit scene. A river wound glistening far beneath them, and the scattered lights, which gleamed from the peillices on either side, gave to the uneven concave an air of greater magnitude as well as beauty. The sounds of festive merriment were also heard, though softened in the distance; and the night was so calm that the gurgling of the river, as it broke upon some stony shallows, rose softly to their ears. The mind of Kenric, lulled by the tranquil loveliness of the night scene, was stolen away from the contemplation of the moral horrors in which he was invited to partake, and he murmured involuntarily in a low voice, "How beautiful! how exquisitely beautiful!"

As they rode down the vale, they passed through various groups of armed men, accoutred in dress and weapons of different forms and hues, from the saffron mantle of the western mountains to the beautiful purple of Osruidhe. They challenged as the travellers passed them, and were answered by Inguar, who let the Anglo-Saxon know that they were some allied tribes whom Baseg had induced to enter into his design, and who flocked from far and near to join his standard. Some of these were under arms, as if keeping guard, while others lay at length, beside their watchfires, or danced to the shrill sound of the piobh mala, or the tinkling crotalin.

Passing a narrow bridge, which was also guarded by sentinels on either end, they found themselves before the entrance of a somewhat extensive building. Here Inguar and the Northumbrian dismounted, committing their horses to the care of the daltins who attended them. The door was presently thrown open, and Kenric was introduced to the presence of Baseg.

"Thou art welcome," said the thanist, warmly: "the

more so that thy coming is a prodigy. Thou seest that we are fated to be friends."

Kenric returned his greeting with equal cordiality, and a conversation ensued upon the present hopes and prospects of the thanist. So just appeared the intentions of the old man, so moderate his views, so prudent the precautions he had taken to prevent the evils which might be expected to arise from the employment of the northern weapons in his cause, that his resolution to remain aloof was almost shaken. A feast was made in the Dun to do him honour, at which he was made known to the young Ard-Drai, and to Eiré. The night passed merrily away with mirth and dancing, and Kenric did not refuse to enter into the spirit of the scene. He was frequently rallied by Inguar, in the course of the evening, on the intimate understanding which, he said, appeared to exist between the daughter of Carthann and himself. It is singular that, notwithstanding his knowledge of the groundlessness of these insinuations, the Northumbrian was not displeased to hear them urged.

On the following morning, taking the scholar into a private grotto, which had been made by Eithne, near the river side, Baseg proceeded, at Kenric's wish, to disclose, in detail, the circumstances which had deprived him of his inheritance, with the names and places which had been hitherto kept concealed. With the feelings of one who has escaped a precipice, the Northumbrian learned that the person whom he had for so long a time been taught to regard with abhorrence and with condemnation, was the friend of his boyhood and his youth; that the usurper whom he had been desired to execrate was **Elim**, the young chieftain of **Rath-Aedain**!

CHAPTER LX.

BEFORE the return of Kenric to Rath-Aedain, the perplexity of his friends had given away to uneasiness. The Northumbrian had bidden farewell to his young host for a few days, stating his desire to make an excursion into the country, in company with the Ansruth, whom he had seen and entertained at Inbherseine. Astonished at the proposition, and still more at the suddenness with which it was made and executed, the Ithian had, however, no right, as he supposed, to penetrate what the Northumbrian chose to keep a mystery. He offered, accordingly, but few objections to his departure, only urging that it should not be protracted beyond the time he had named.

His perplexity, however, was soon changed into alarm, when more than half a moon went by and there came no tidings of the Northumbrian. It might be possible that his absence was voluntarily prolonged, but it was also not unlikely that the whole might be a scheme for his destruction. While he was meditating, in the deepest anxiety, on these circumstances, Macha entered the apartment in which he stood, with a countenance which announced some communication of importance.

"Elim," she said, as soon as they were alone, "I have intelligence to give which does not admit of an hour's delay. Have you the best reason to rely on the integrity of your Northumbrian friend?"

O'Haedha seemed astonished at the question.

"Surely, Macha," said he, "thou canst not but have seen the intimate confidence that was between us?"

"I talk not of my own surmises," answered Macha, "but wish to learn the truth. Hast thou the fullest reason to be assured of the integrity of Kenric?"

"I have never experienced anything that could lead me to distrust him," answered Elim.

"Thou hesitatest, then," said Macha, with a smile, "to answer me directly. It is enough. Let Moyel enter!" she exclaimed, to an attendant, who waited in an outer apartment.

Soon after, the voice of the seneschal was heard without, addressing another person in a voice of encouragement and quaint condolence. The door opened, and Moyel appeared, supporting the aged fosterer of Elim, Clothra, whom years had now almost reduced to helplessness of body and of mind.

Encouraged by Macha, and prompted by the seneschal, she afforded at intervals, and with the efforts of an intellect almost extinct, the glimpses of a transaction which excited, to the highest, the astonishment and anxiety of Elim.

"She was seated," she said, "according to her custom, when the weather permitted it, near a hedge row, at the foot of her small garden, when a voice, which seemed that of the Anglo-Saxon Ollamb, whom O'Haedha had frequently brought with him when he visited their dwelling, struck upon her ear. He was joined soon after by another, and they spoke together in low tones, and in sentences of which she could only gather scattered words, concerning a 'plot,' and 'secrecy.' But the circumstance which remained most deeply engraved upon her mind was, the tone in which she had heard the Northumbrian ask—*'Well, what of Baseg?'*"

The name of Baseg had never, on any occasion that he could call to mind, entered into the conversation of Elim and his friend. He could hardly, therefore, imagine Clothra's statement could be other than a mistake. But the old woman was most tenacious of the point, and most distinct in her remembrance of the words, and the accent of the speaker.

Scarcely had Clothra ended her communication, when an officer entered to announce the approach of the physician of the sept, Finnglín, with his three inseparable assistants. They were admitted, Finnglín advancing in front, while the three daltas, as they entered one by one, stepped aside, and fell into line in a gloomy corner of the chamber.

"Well, sage Finnglín," said Elim, "what causes this unexpected visit?"

"If it be not matter of importance," answered Finnglín, "thou mayest even call it frivolous likewise. What I have to communicate I myself have witnessed, and my three assistants also can substantiate."

The three daltas, to whom he turned by way of appeal, bowed with a simultaneous movement of assent, from the darksome shade in which they stood; which action they repeated, with great solemnity, at every appeal made by Finnglín, in the course of the following narrative:

"I, Finnglín," continued the physician, "wearied with my diurnal duties, was seated on the quiet green before my dwelling, in the sunset last evening, when a strange ceannuighe made his appearance from beneath the trees, seated on a hobbie, on which, with difficulty, he preserved his seat. As he came near, the cause of his weakness was apparent. An arrow, bearing the feather of no bird that I have ever seen, was buried deep in the flesh beneath his shoulder. My three assistants can declare it. We assisted him from his horse, and conveyed him to our dwelling, where the weapon was removed, and where he now remains in process of recovery. To our inquiries he would answer little, but on this morning desired that we should communicate the circumstance to O'Haedha, and added a request, which I trust thou wilt excuse, in one disabled in body, and, consequently, not over sound in mind."

"Speak it, I pray you, Finngbhín, without delay," said Elim.

"He had the face to desire that thou shouldst visit him," replied the physician; "a chimerical demand, which can be easily reversed by conveying him hither between some of the kerne. The danger will not be very great, provided the men be careful and the litter easy. This is the whole amount of my communication, and if thou see reason to doubt of any of the particulars, my three assistants will declare if I have not spoken the truth."

"It is so," answered the three in unison.

Elim immediately prepared to accompany the physician to his dwelling, while Clothra was reconducted by Moyel to her cottage near the shore. On his arrival at the apartment of the wounded man, he had little difficulty in recognizing the ceannuighe whom he had overtaken in the Gleann na ngealt, on his journey to Inismore, and from whom he had first received intelligence of the appearance of the Finn Geinte on the coasts of Uladh. After answering the inquiries which Elim made respecting his present condition, the merchant asked, in his turn, if the Ithian or his people had lately suffered any depredation on their kine?

The chieftain replied in the negative.

"My motive for inquiring," said the merchant, "is this. From trading long in the territories of the south, I have become familiar to a nicety with the various septs and their possessions, and I am certain that I saw, only yesterday even, a number of the small kine of Rath-Aedain in the hands of an armed party, strangers to the sept."

Elim earnestly desired the particulars.

"I arrived," said the merchant, "late in the dusk of yesterday's twilight, on the crags which overlook a lonesome bay to the eastward of Ross Ailithir. The sound of voices in so solitary a place made me proceed with caution, and fastening my hobbie in a thicket, I ascended

the eminence with caution, in order to observe the cause of what had startled me. Five or six currachs, of a peculiar shape, lay close to shore, and a number of men, some in armour, and some attired in the dress of mountaineers, but of a sept with which I am unacquainted, were occupied in slaughtering the kine I have described, and loading the small craft with the dismembered carcasses. The mountaineers drew off, and left the shore before the boats put out to sea. Soon after, the armed mariners embarked, and I ventured from my place of secrecy. They had not gone so far from land but that I was perceived, and a flight of arrows reached me from the water. One only happened to reach its aim, and has, I fear, inflicted deeper injury than Finnghín will allow. Endeavour now to call to mind if any of thy kine were missing within the year."

After long recollection, the circumstance of the fee which he had given to the strange Ansruth, recurred to the mind of Elim, and became instantly associated with the information given by Clothra. Both combined, excited a degree of suspicion which, indefinite as it was, seemed strongly warranted, and which was changed to certainty by the further communications of the wounded ceannuighe."

The patient was attended by a nun, one of those cenobitical virgins of Inisfail, from amongst whose number Rome was continually selecting some of the brightest ornaments of its calendar. In these days when our sensibilities are grown so fine, and our charity so cold, it might be hazardous even to describe what then was actually performed without reluctance. Let it be enough to say, that a work of mercy, similar to that which is applauded in the wife of Edward the Black Prince, and which, as exerted by a mother toward a child, has afforded a subject for an accomplished foreign pen, was performed toward the wounded stranger: by one of those

holy maids, whose charity enabled them to triumph over the strongest repugnances of nature. In thus, however, affording relief to the festered wound of the ceannuighe, the ministering saint was enabled to discover that it had been inflicted with a poisoned weapon, and the turn which the disorder took, ere long, exemplified the truth of the announcement.

Being made aware of his condition, the ceannuighe exhibited the keenest distress of mind, and entreated the immediate presence of a confessor. His desire was complied with, and after having received the parting rites of his religion, he now again requested an interview with the Ithian chief. Once more, Finngín, with many prefaces, announced this new desire of the wounded man to Elim, who at once repaired to his bedside.

"Hast thou yet," asked the patient, "called to mind if any plunder was at any time committed on thy kine?"

"The only time," replied O'Haedha, "at which they were diminished by plunder is long since past; and then full restitution was made by the chief of the marauders, Curaoi, the Ard-Drai of the Hooded People."

The merchant for a considerable time after Elim spoke those words, remained without reply, or even motion. At length, turning his face with an expression of the deepest earnestness on O'Haedha, he said, in a low voice:

"He whom thou esteemest the murderer of thy father Conall?"

"The same," said Elim, in astonishment, "the same, although his deed is now forgotten in his cairn."

"Thou wrongest his ashes by the thought," said the merchant. "'Tis not on him the blood of Conall rests."

In his transient intercourse with the Ard-Drai, Elim had, as long since mentioned, frequently remarked the singular unconsciousness of any remembered injury to himself which had been manifested by Curaoi. This startling announcement of the wounded man seemed so much in

harmony with his own observation, that he listened, with the most intense anxiety, for the disclosure which this introduction taught him to expect.

The ceannuighe had been in his youth a dependent in the Rath of Gormadark, the lonely dwelling of the thanist Baseg. By services rendered to his family and to himself he had been attached to Baseg in a degree which the proud and selfish manners of the latter did not allow him often to experience. Previous to the wedding of Conall, recorded in our opening chapter, he had for a considerable time resided at Rath-Aedain, in compliance with the wishes of the chief, who loved him with an affection that not even injury itself could shake. More than once, in the course of their friendship, the life of Conall had been ineffectually aimed at, and the proofs that these attempts originated in the instigation of his thanist and declared successor, amounted almost to demonstration. The chieftain, however, who esteemed the bravery of Baseg, with an excess of confidence which often accompanies a generous nature, not only pardoned Baseg on his penitence, but did not take the slightest precautions to guard against a recurrence of such practices. His rashness brought upon him the natural consequences.

A certain moral timidity of character, which could be changed to obstinacy but not to firmness, was a weakness that distinguished Baseg. This had for a considerable time prevented his avowing a secret passion he had entertained for Macha, the elder daughter of O'Driscoll, the Ceannfinny of Cleir. While he deliberated, Conall, entirely ignorant of his views and hopes, defeated both by sueing, himself, in the same quarter, with success. With astonishment and rage, beyond what it is easy to express, the thanist heard him communicate in confidence to himself the prosperous reception he had met at Cleir, and the happiness which he expected to enjoy from so desirable an union. He had the cunning, however, to disguise

feelings, the disclosure of which could not tend to their removal.

On the day which followed the return of Conall and his bride to Inbhersceine, the thanist arrived at Gormadark, where the ceannuighe, then scarcely entered on the age of manhood, was almost his sole attendant. For many months he seemed to be wholly absorbed in gloomy thoughts, and even from his former confidant withheld the slightest intimation of his feelings. The ceannuighe had heard that Conall was threatened, at the wedding feast, by the Ard-Drai of the Coom na n-Druadh: but many months went by, and the menace was almost forgotten. Ere the year was ended, he observed that Baseg often left his home for days together, and on one occasion he brought with him, late at night, to Gormadark, a stranger, whom the thanist scarcely permitted the ceannuighe to behold even for an instant. The visitor remained till dawn; and during the night was heard at intervals to maintain a long debate with Baseg. From what could be gathered in broken sentences of their conversation, it appeared that his guest was urging Baseg to some undertaking in which the latter was unwilling to embark, and when they left the house together at dawn, the dissatisfaction that appeared upon their countenances seemed to show that they had not yet arrived at any adjustment of the matter in dispute.

In a few days after, while the ceannuighe was standing, at noon, in the glen of Gormadark, at no great distance from the lonesome dwelling, and wondering at the protracted absence of the thanist, the latter appeared on horseback, galloping, at a prodigious rate, in the direction of the desolate Rath. On approaching the ceannuighe, he commanded him instantly to follow him to a neighbouring height, where they found an archer, lying, as if in ambush, among the heath. They heard the sounds of an affray as they approached, and some shielings appeared on fire at a distance.

"Well, Eimhir," said the thanist, as they approached the archer, "canst thou see *him* amongst them yet?"

"He has not yet appeared," replied the latter.

Commanding the ceannuighe to remain beside the stranger, the thanist gallopped now, with an almost winged speed, in the direction of Rath-Aedain. By subsequent calculation, this seemed to be the time when Macha, standing on the ramparts, beheld him approaching at full speed, and sent him, unknowing what she did, to the assistance of his brother.

On returning to the place where he had left the archer and the ceannuighe, Baseg dismounted, with a bound, and committed his horse to the keeping of the latter, exclaiming at the same instant, in a voice of the deepest agitation :

"Quick, Eimhir, quick ! They say thou art an archer in a thousand—now, follow me, and prove it. He is in the Glen of Oaks."

They hurried together down a craggy steep, leaving the ceannuighe to hold the thanist's horse. In a short time the latter beheld them hurrying up the opposite ascent, the summit of which, as he knew, overlooked the Glen of Oaks, in which he still could hear the din of combat. He could discern the two figures on the opposite summit, the archer seeming to wait the favourable moment to discharge his missile—often raising and often lowering the bended bow, while the thanist watched his aim, without a motion. At length the shaft was sped, and a loud cry of many voices from the distant glen seemed to announce his murderous success. Immediately both figures vanished from the height, and, shortly after, a horseman, the same who had spent a night at Gormadark, appeared galloping from the glen towards the interior of the country. Before the return of Baseg, the great disaster of the day had reached the ears of the ceannuighe himself. All knew, ere long, that Conall was no more, but few, like

Baseg's horror-struck attendant, were aware to what hand, and to whose instigation, he owed his death wound.

It was the dark of eve, before the thanist returned to the spot where the ceannuighe awaited him, and from which the latter feared to move without his orders. Fearful of affording the slightest clue to a detection of the dreadful truth, the thanist had caused the arrow to be extracted from the frame of his dead kinsman, and, unobserved, concealed it underneath his mantle.

His crime consummated, his gloomy passion gratified at length, the miserable fratricide fled with the speed of guilt from the paradise which, by a single blow, he had turned into a waste of grief and fear. He had crossed the Glen of Oaks, he had passed the adjoining valley, he had hurried up the lonesome steep of rock, he had gained the solitary spot where his horse awaited him, before one moment of connected thought had visited his brain. It was now nightfall, and the ceannuighe, to whose care he had entrusted the weary animal, wondered at the absence of mind manifested by his master. While he prepared the horse for the departure of the thanist, Baseg, hiding within the folds of his tunic the arrow and the bloody hand which held it, remained seated on a rock beside the horse, hiding his face from the arising moonlight, and brooding stilly over his own breast. The strangeness of the place, the hour, the silence, and the sudden rest from violent exertion, produced, as he afterwards confessed to the ceannuighe, a desolation in his mind, of which he never had before the faintest experience. It seemed for the time as if all had left him, even the fiends that tempted, and the passions that had been their engines. A horrid feeling of abandonment sunk like a night-mare down upon his soul, and left his memory dreadfully distinct. It would be to share his agony to endeavour to describe or to contemplate it.

Suddenly, while the ceannuighe was busy with the

horse, the thought occurred to him of the bloody arrow and the bloody hand. Dropping on his knees, he tore up the grassy mould with his fingers, buried the weapon in the earth, and kneaded the soil above it with his hands. Before he rose, he darted a wild glance on either side, and stooping with his face to the earth, said, in hurried whispers :

"There, there—lie there, O cursed instrument ! Let no one ever look upon thee more. In pride, in horrid hate, I first directed, and now in blood, and gloom, and in despair, I here resign thee, instrument of hell ! Hark ! peace ! was that the Ard-Drai's voice that spoke ? He warned me to beware of this in vain !"

He continued for some time striving to cleanse his hands, by rubbing them with the broken earth, while he spoke unconsciously to himself. Fear, terrible remorse, and damp despair possessed him as he hurried from the place, and turned his horse's head in the direction of Gormadark. The animal sped along the mountain passes with a wild and terrified haste, as if his back were crossed by some unearthly rider. The scourge of mad Orestes, the intense and horrid agony of passion sated by unnatural violence, oppressed the breast of the fratricide with a smothering influence. That fellest image of an outraged conscience, the undying worm that burrows in the heart, already fixed its poisoned tooth in Baseg's. The running streams seemed tinged with Conall's blood, the rustling trees seemed starting at the murderer's approach, the rushing wind seemed shrieking to all nature to beware of the false friend—the blood-stained Baseg. If he looked to heaven, the clouds seemed flying fast before his face, or gathering in gloom for his destruction ; the earth, as he passed on, seemed glad to escape from under him. Whatever he heard, saw, smelled, or felt, as he sped onward, seemed to bear the hue, scent, sound, or touch of death and crime ; for it surely brought to his senses some

portion of the ghastly scene which he had just performed. The surface of the world seemed changed since Conall had been slain by Baseg, there seemed no part of universal nature unmoved by the shock of that accursed, vengeful blow.

"The murderer!" he muttered to himself—"the murderer, that dreadful epithet! that dreadful, dreadful word! Is it possible? Am I a murderer? Is it done, indeed? Is it done? or have I only dreamed of it! Tell me, some spirit, something whisper me that I am dreaming still; that I am only plotting Conall's death; that 'tis not done; that I can yet stop short; that this is not his blood upon my hand; that I have not yet dealt that horrid stroke; that I am even as I was yesterday—not guiltier than yesterday! I now would give a thousand, thousand lives to be again even that accursed thing that I was yesterday! For every thing but this there was a remedy; I never took a step before in crime, however deep, that might not be retraced. Neglected duty might be paid with diligence; but there's no remedy, no recal for this! Not all the tears that sorrow ever shed, not all the sighs contrition ever breathed, not all the heart-aches, all the dagger-pains that conscience fixes in the brain and breast, not all that man could act or suffer, can waken Conall now from his repose. The deed is done, the dreadful height is reached, the key-stone of the bridge is passed that spanned the fiery gulf; the tangled clue can never more be freed; eternal death awaits me in the labyrinth. Oh, woe and horror! I am lost most miserably!"

Arrived at Gormadark, he hurried to his sleeping-room, and flung himself upon his bed of rushes. No peace, however, here awaited him. The fearful sense of ruin fast approaching, and wholly unavoidable, made him writhe and turn in anguish as he lay. The terror of the mariner, who, venturing too far within the influence of the

dreadful maw of the northern maelstrom, first hears its fatal thunder gradually increasing on his ear, then sees his canvas trembling on the yards, and feels, at length, his vessel, rocked and powerless, hurried, circle after circle, into the destructive centre of the gulf, resembled, but with a faint similitude, the tumultuous anguish that filled the soul of Baseg. A stern and barren remorse stole upon his mind, and made the flesh creep, even to his very extremities. It was no longer with him as in his former self-reproaching interviews with Conall, for now he could not shed a tear. A strange and dry anxiety of soul came over him, and the agonies of his spirit are felt in the very muscles of his frame. He would have given a world to be able to weep as he had done when pardoned by his brother; but a horrid dryness had parched up his nature, and the feeling of a barren and gloomy terror was all that remained to him. It seemed as if his very breast was withered up with the influence of that direst of passions to which the human heart is subject—blank and unprofitable remorse, unsoftened by repentance, unrelieved by hope.

The dreadful passion grew upon him as the night came down, and filled his nerves with suffering. A night of frightful dreams it was to him, and spectre-ridden slumbers. Sometimes his brother's shade seemed fixing its cold eyes on his, with one hand gathering the war-cloak on his bosom, and the other pointing upward covertly, and as if by stealth. For many days he held no communion with any of the inmates of his own abode, farther than his absolute necessities required. The impossibility, however, of preserving his secret with safety to his reason, compelled him to make a confidant, and he revealed the whole to the cearnuighe. On two occasions, long since past, he had, he said, been guilty of abortive practices, having the same object as this which had now so fatally succeeded; but the repeated generosity of Conall had

produced so deep an impression on his mind, that he sincerely determined never again to give occasion for its exercise. In this resolution he had persevered until the unhappy occasion which preceded Conall's marriage, and which gave new fire to all his former passions. The incident of the quarrel which took place during the marriage feast, between the Druid chieftain and the bridegroom, suggested to him a new channel through which they might be gratified, with more security than before. He sought the friendship of the Ard-Drai, and they exchanged a mutual confidence; the former, however, only supposing that Baseg aimed at the power of O'Haedha, and far from suspecting the lengths to which his unnatural hatred now desired to extend itself. The Druid was anxious immediately to march his troops to Inbhersceine, and was astonished to observe that Baseg, who had been at first his warmest instigator, seemed now reluctant to proceed. The truth was, Baseg, secretly conscious of the nature of his own design, and of its atrocious motive, hung back, when all appeared to favour its completion; for he had overcome the remorses of the fratricide, where Curaoi had only to contend with the mercies of the common foe. In the conversation which they had held at night at Gormadark, the thanist, who, though obstinate to a ferocious degree when once embarked in evil, yet wavered long ere good was yet relinquished, endeavoured to prevail on the Ard-Drai to pursue the war without requiring his assistance or connivance. His proposal, however, was rejected by the Druid; and with a degree of reproach that confirmed the thanist in the guilty course he meditated. He hired a dexterous archer of the Coom, to ensure the issue of his own designs, and did not leave the valley until Curaoi and his troops had set out on their incursion. The rest was already known to the ceannuighe, who had been himself almost an eye-witness to the fall of the confiding Conall.

Scarcely had Baseg communicated these events to his dependent, when the Ard-Drai appeared at their dwelling, for the first time since the night which he had spent in disputation with the thanist. The manner of the latter, on hearing him announced, was such as terrified the confidant. The poor wretch seemed almost unable at his approach to repress an outburst of delirious rage. By one of those revulsions of feeling to which weak minds are liable, he seemed disposed to treat the Ard-Drai with the same abhorrence as if, in instigating him to undertake the war, he had acted with the fullest knowledge of his secret motive.

These feelings did not diminish when the Ard-Drai entered the apartment where the thanist sat. The deepest anguish and fury that almost touched the verge of lunacy, possessed the soul of this pitiable creature at the sight of the unconscious instigator of his crime. The torrent of his remorse burst forth at once, and turmoil and distraction rent his nature.

"Avoid my sight, accursed reptile!" he exclaimed, crossing his arms before his face, and bending down his head, as if in loathing. "Away, and let me never more be plagued with sight, or sound, or touch, of thee. Let seas, let mountains separate us, Curaoi! Return, and let thy native mountains hide thee! Be satisfied, for all has been accomplished."

He paused, and Curaoi, without changing his position, remained gazing, in astonishment, upon him.

"Ay, it has reached that end," continued Baseg, with a somewhat altered tone. "Thy triumph is now fearfully complete. The end of blood is answered."

"The end of blood!" said Curaoi, in amazement.

"Didst thou not hear it then," said Baseg, hastily: "I thought the island rung of it these ten days. Didst thou not hear what I had done to Conall?"

"*Thou* done to him?" exclaimed Curaoi, shrinking, and looking pale.

"Yes. What is this?" continued the wretched thanist, looking strangely on the attitude of surprise and fear which the Ard-Drai had assumed. "*Thou* starest like a virgin at the tidings! *Thou* turnest aside, and lettest thy flesh grow pale, as if the deed had horror even for thee! *Thou* daring hypocrite! dost thou presume to say that thou art one of the innocent wonderers?"

"Answer me, if thou canst, in moderate words," said Curaoi, still trembling anxiously. "Hast thou shed the blood of Conall, the Ithian chief?"

"He is dead, and by my means," said Baseg, shuddering.

"Unhappy wretch!" cried the Ard-Drai, taking up the ball of wrath. "Comest thou with hands all reeking, after such a treason, to vent thy foul and ugly rage on me? Begone, blood-stained man, and rail at those who equal thee in thine enormity. *My* end, the end of blood? *My* triumph consummated? When did I ever hint so dire a treachery? When did I ever urge thee to a murder? These hands, 'tis true, are far from spotless hands; but never, never have they yet been stained with blood, shed thus with the stab of secret murder."

The thanist, silent, stared ghastly on the earth.

"Oh, blind!" continued Curaoi. "Oh, murderous and blind! Our jeopardy was imminent already, but thou hast made our ruin almost certain. Haste now, and let us not consume the time, the precious purchase of security, in idiot, vain upbraidings. The death of Conall has raised a cry of vengeance, almost to the utmost boundaries of Leath Mogha, and disastrous will our undertaking be if not most promptly settled either by peace or triumph."

By an effort, violent but necessary, Baseg now compelled himself to enter into a dispassionate arrangement of their affairs. It was finally decided that their connec-

tion should still be kept a mystery; that Baseg should assert his claim to the title of O'Haedha, and then avert the gathering storm from the head of his ally. The failure of this scheme, owing to the promptitude of Macha, and the subsequent misfortunes of the Hooded People, are already known.

It was after his numerous defeats, and his public apostasy to the Druid creed, that the miserable thanist formed the resolution of bidding farewell to the land which he had stained with his enormities. He communicated his intention to the young confidant, whose secrecy he insured by kindness shown to his friends and to himself, by gifts of wealth beyond what the latter ever expected to possess, and by reminding him of long accumulating debts of gratitude. They arrived together in Ross Ailithir, whence the thanist proposed to embark for Inismore, when a conversation accidentally started at the public table of a beatach, respecting the approaching baptism of the infant Elim, suggested to him the last resource of endeavouring to possess himself of the person of his helpless rival. His dependent, who had now for the first time taken up the calling of ceannuighe (although we have, for the sake of distinction, given him that title throughout the preceding narrative), took care, by private information, opportunely given, to render his design abortive. He it was from whom, as the reader has long since been made aware, the mother of Elim received the warning at the time of her departure from the cathedral of Ross Ailithir.

The thanist, cunning as he was passionate, suspected, from the invariable discomfiture of his plans, and the evident difficulty with which the ceannuighe had been wrought upon to keep his guilt concealed, that he was indebted for his ill-success to the unextinguished honesty of the latter. He made, therefore, one farther effort to accomplish his desire, without admitting the ceannuighe into his confidence; and, as we have already mentioned

long before, almost achieved his end, by bribing a person to seek the cottage of Elim's foster parents, in the disguise of one of those merchants who traded in ger-falcons (a bird even at that time held in high estimation). After the failure of this last effort, the thanist prepared at once to put his design of voluntary exile into execution.

Before he embarked, he visited once more alone the scenes where Conall and himself had dwelt together. In his boyish years Baseg had been distinguished, not only by a degree of talent beyond the ordinary standard, but by a long continued and apparently fervent piety. It may, therefore, be imagined with how little ease of mind he trod those scenes which, at every step, reminded him of early happiness and early virtue, with a conscience stained by crime, and a creed assumed for earthly interests. Standing on the summit of an eminence which overlooked the valley of Rath-Aedain and the distant bay, he paused to contemplate the sunset scene in silence.

"Ye venomed thoughts!" he murmured, deep in anguish; "ye serpent fancies, breathing of hell and guilt, why did I ever heed your idiot guile? But no, it was not you, you are innocent—it was not you that stamped the burning brand upon my spirit. You never could have wounded, could have blinded me, if I had not myself supplied the means. Time was, you only moved my careless scorn, as now my deep disgust and fell abhorrence. It was my own false heart that wrought my ruin; if this be ruin, this wild gloomy labyrinth, in which my reason, hope, and all are lost. What now can tear it from my brain and bosom? what cure my poisoned heart? what help me to think simply as of old? It is in vain; in vain I writhe and turn! In vain I stretch my arms to look for peace—the sunny calm that shone upon my childhood. The smoke of hell conceals it from my view, and leaves me smothering with foreseen destruction! Ah, Baseg! is it come to this at last? Must I then yield? Are

these despairing thoughts become my own? And is the way entirely closed behind me? And shall I feel no more those blessed influences that softened my young heart in happier days, and moulded it to penitence and virtue?"

The sound of mirthful music from the valley, for the moment, checked the train of these reflections. The cheerful sounds, proceeding from that grove which once had veiled the seat of Conall's power, struck on his ears as he was about descending to mingle in the scene of mirth. He shuddered at the deep familiar sound, and at the changes which it brought to his recollection. New torments fell upon his guilty spirit. Thoughts fierce as burning arrows pierced his soul, and he sat, gasping for air, upon the height, as if his sufferings would have stifled him. He gazed intently on the Rath and its environs, now darkening in the twilight, except upon the spot where he was standing, and which was lighted by the sun, just sinking far away in the waves of Inbhersceine. It was the spot where Conall had bestowed upon him that confidence for which he suffered so severely. A fit of thrilling and increasing anguish succeeded these remembrances and fears. The holy truths which he had dared to slight, the duties he had left unexecuted, the avenging law he had transgressed, the eternal covenant he had renounced, seemed gathering in silent gloom above his head, and mustering for his ruin. The creeping torture grew upon his frame, he dashed himself against the earth in agony, as if he would, if possible, have hid himself for ever in its bosom. A maniac tumult seemed to rend his brain; he writhed; he shook with terror as he lay upon the crag. The faithless! the apostate! the false traitor! The coward recreant to his first allegiance! The dastard renegade to his first debt of gratitude! The outcast hypocrite! the thing of scorn and loathing to all bright and virtuous beings! The prey, and sport, and mock of all the fiends—the ingrate, and the fratricide.

Such were the feelings, or a faint resemblance to the feelings, which attended Baseg during his farewell visit to the scenes of his early life. On leaving Inisfail, he gradually became hardened to their impressions, and, except in dreams, or when his nature was enfeebled by physical disease, he never displayed those dreadful symptoms of remorse, which at the first he had found so uncontrollable. Still, even through the lapse of time which intervened between his banishment and his return, the horrid passion had not ceased to haunt him; and those who were accustomed to watch his hours of slumber and of sickness could tell, that the phantasma of a hurried scene of violence and passion continued to possess his memory.

The above, in the leading circumstances, was the disclosure made by the wounded ceannuighe to Elim, as he sat by his bedside. On being asked by the latter what ground he had for the caution which he gave him some months before (on the day after he had overtaken him in the Gleann na ngealt), the ceannuighe replied, that he was aware that Baseg still existed in the neighbouring isle, and that he was far from having relinquished all hope of re-establishing his right to the inheritance which he had forfeited. Exhausted by this long narration, the patient now requested that he might be left to his repose, and Elim returned to Rath-Aedain, in a state of mind to which, till then, he had been a stranger.

CHAPTER LXI.

MORE than a fortnight had now elapsed since Kenric left the Rath, and Elim's perplexity and alarm were increased in a high degree. The Northumbrian at length returned,

but it was evident to all, as soon as he had reached Rath-Aedain, from his altered spirits, his haggard complexion, and his fitful manner, that something had occurred to agitate his mind to its foundation. In vain did he strive to meet the hospitable joy with which he was received; in vain did he strive to return with ease the greeting of his friends, and the cordial delight of Eithne. The eye of Macha, kindly as its expression was, seemed to search his very soul, and he appeared to feel as if he were already a traitor to his friend in his own thoughts.

During the following day it became more evident that something had occurred to change his usual temper. In vain did he endeavour to sustain his usual part in conversation; and the efforts which he made seemed only to increase his subsequent depressions.

On the second day after his return, he accompanied Elim, in quality of steersman, on a trip to the little island in the bay, where the latter, as already mentioned, had erected a kind of Dun, as a place of refuge, in case of danger to the helpless inmates of the Rath. It was plain that the confidence which once united them, no longer existed in the mind of either. Both therefore were reserved in their demeanour, and, with the exception of a few remarks of a general nature, the excursion passed in silence. The chief design on both sides, which was that of affording an opportunity for mutual explanation, was thus defeated, and they returned still more estranged than when they had set out.

Eithne, who was even more unacquainted than Elim with any cause for Kenric's strange demeanour, endeavoured at first to rally him out of his contemplative moods, so improperly indulged in the midst of their social recreations. She was the more disposed to use her efforts in restoring him to his self-recollection, and it was observed that, towards her, his manner was still more altered than to others.

"Kenric," she said, "the planets say that thou hast played them false. The Pleiads weep, and Orion growls indignantly at thy neglect. What wonder dost thou brood upon, good Kenric? Why art thou altered? Thou dost not speak with half the freedom thou wast wont to use with us; and me thou sometimes even seemest to avoid."

"Do not disturb thyself with Kenric's follies, Eithne," said the Northumbrian, looking away from her.

"Why then," said Eithne, bending forward, with a look of serious and yet kind reproof, "why then art thou changed, good Kenric? Art thou unwell in health, or hast thou heard ill tidings from thy home in Inismore?"

"Neither, kind Eithne," Kenric answered; "neither one nor the other."

"I am very glad to hear it," replied the maiden, "for although I grieve to see thee sad without a cause, I had rather see thee so than know thou hadst one. Good Kenric, do not be so melancholy. Walk not alone so much, nor think so deeply, or at least so sadly. My father—my dear father, used to say, that thought, like water, should be kept running to continue wholesome."

"Thy father spoke the truth," said Kenric, "and so did mine at times," he added to himself.

"Then, wherefore dost thou go so much alone?" said Eithne. "Resume thy mirth—resume thy cheerfulness. I would be grieved to see thee altered thus, for I know no one after Elim, and my almost parent, Macha, whom I should miss so much from Inbherisceine, for all the noble scorn of vanity."

Kenric hastily looked round upon her, and then turned away his head, as if afraid to gaze long upon the bright and happy countenance from which this speech, so well intended, yet, to him, so full of danger, unconsciously proceeded.

"Thou wilt thyself be altered, Eithne," said the Northumbrian, "when thou art the lady of Rath-Aedain."

"Except in being the lady of Rath-Aedain," answered Eithne, "I will be ever what thou seest me—the merrier, perhaps, for being happier."

Kenric was silent, but his demeanour did not mend. On the day following that of his excursion with Elim to the island, while he stood in a deserted chamber of the Rath, deliberating still upon the course he should adopt, the figured hanging which served for a door was put aside, and Eithne entered, with a countenance more anxious than Kenric had ever seen it.

"I have been longing to see thee alone, Kenric, for the purpose of endeavouring once more to learn in what we have offended thee?"

"Thou, Eithne! thou offend me!" exclaimed the Northumbrian, with a tone of mingled surprise and tenderness, "thou never didst, thou never couldst offend me. Of all the beings who have any influence over me, thou art the very last that could offend me. I am very weak and wayward in my mind, but not at all offended."

"I spoke not of myself," said Eithne, anxiously. "Thy friends, the people of the Rath, the very kerne, have all remarked thy change, and many an evil word it has brought on thee."

Kenric was silent for a time, and seemed, from an occasional shivering that shook his frame, like that of a person shrinking from an ice blast, to be making an effort to take some decided resolution.

"Eithne," he said, at length, in a voice which seemed to her the most mournful she had ever heard, "I am rather dull in spirits, for I am never now to see Rath-Aedain more."

Eithne looked stunned at this intelligence, and uttered an exclamation of surprise and grief.

"Not see Rath-Aedain any more!" she exclaimed. "What! Kenric, art thou leaving us for ever?"

The Northumbrian was unable to answer for some time, for he did not expect that Eithne would have felt so lively a sorrow at the news he told, and her tone of heartfelt grief increased the difficulty of his situation.

"It is little wonder," he said, at length, "that I should feel sad at going, Eithne, for I never spent so happy a time as I have done since my arrival, nor ever hope to do again."

"And wherefore leave us then," said Eithne; "thou art not returning to Northumberland?"

"Not yet, at least," replied the Anglo-Saxon.

"Where then?" said Eithne, pressingly. "Why wouldst thou forsake us? I know that we are simple and unlearned, but Elim is not so; and if thou findest no pleasure in our converse, the pleasure thou bestowest should keep thee with us."

She paused on a sudden, for Kenric's action startled her. He took a few hurried paces towards the entrance, paused for a long time, his face covered with his hand, and his cloak drawn tight around his person. He then slowly returned, and exposed to her view a countenance, that expressed in a fearful degree, by its mottled paleness and the disorder of the moistened hair, the ravages of internal conflict. He gazed upon Eithne, for a time, and strove to say something, but seemed incapable of articulating a sound, and at length hastened from her presence without speaking. Hurrying into the air, he sat down on the hill side, inhaling the fresh breeze with a triumphant yet exhausted look, like that of the successful combatant in a manual contest.

CHAPTER LXII.

HIS own reflections, the reserve of Kenric, the caution of Vuscfraëa, and the late warning of his parent, all now combined in Elim's recollection, and filled his breast anew with alarms which he had often made a duty of repressing. Walking out soon after into the neighbouring woods, in order to meditate on the course which he should take, he was overtaken by the Anglo-Saxon, who hurried towards him with a semblance of great haste. To the surprise of the Ithian, he appeared in full attire for travelling; and there was in his demeanour, and the expression of his countenance, a look of decision and of cheerfulness which were most unlike the usual character of both.

"Elim," he exclaimed, "I have been seeking thee at the house, and in the grove, and by the bridges, and wherever there was any hope of finding thee."

"Indeed!" said Elim.

"I have found thee now, however," he continued, laying his hand familiarly on Elim's shoulder, "and in good time for my purpose, Elim!" he continued, letting his head droop, and pausing for a long time, "I am about to leave thee."

"To leave us, Kenric!"

"Ay, this very hour. My friend, my dear, dear friend, I thank thee for thy love, for all thy kindness."

"But, Kenric!"

"For kindness," continued the Northumbrian, "that was undeserved at first—that still is unrequited—but that never—never shall be forgotten."

"To leave Rath-Aedain, Kenric!" exclaimed Elim.

"To leave it," answered the latter; "instantly to leave it. Come hither, Elim, my friend, and listen to me. I

have often vexed thee by my waywardness; I have often met thy expression of kindness and regard with sullenness and bitterness of speech. I am sorry, very sorry for it now. I would give much now, Elim, that I had never uttered a harsh thought before thee, or cherished a harsh feeling in thine absence."

"Still meditating on these trifles, Kenric," said Elim, seriously, but calmly; "believe me, you wrong us both in dwelling on them thus; we cannot always judge of the evil by the surface."

"True, true—oh, very true!" cried Kenric. "Still, Elim," he continued, looking up again, "at parting I may say that I am sorry. If ever I have seemed to fail in sympathy, let me now pay thee all with truth and earnestness. Thou hopest to enter soon on the fulfilment of thy scheme of happiness. May it be long continued, deep, and ample! May it be perfect in its kind, and quite untroubled in its continuance! May, Elim, the good friend, ere long, be Elim the happy, happy chieftain of his people!"

"What need this warmth, dear Kenric?" asked the Ithian. "Do I not perfectly, entirely know thy thoughts in this respect?"

"I bless thee, because I leave thee," answered Kenric, "and would not have my parting words bear any other sound but those of blessing and of gratitude. And now one word of business: thou must not ask me at this time the cause of my departure; the time may come when thou shalt learn it fully. One thing I am at liberty to say, and that is all. Thou needst not yet, for many a month to come, dread anything from the Nordland raven. The Vikingr has left the coast, but with the fixed design of returning ere the year is ended; and yet a word—this isle has traitors in her bosom. This warning I can fairly give, but not a hint besides. Farewell, I leave thee to make use of it."

"A moment, Kenric," cried Elim, "do not treat us thus. If thou wilt go thus suddenly, at least say whither?"

"Whither, I know not," answered Kenric. "Do not detain me, Elim."

"To Northumbria, is it?" asked the Ithian.

"I tell thee I am ignorant," said Kenric, "but I think not yet of home."

"Thou makest an ill beginning of thy blessing," said Elim, "in robbing me of my friend. One day to speak of this, dear Kenric."

The Anglo-Saxon pressed his arm, and said, in a lower but more earnest tone than before :

"I would not stay an hour for all this earth."

CHAPTER LXIII.

HE hurried off, leaving Elim still perplexed by the nature of the scene, and bewildered by its suddenness. Impetuous in good, as he often was in error, away he hurried in the direction of the coast, where a hired fishing vessel was awaiting his arrival. On the outskirts of the wood he was hailed by the voice of Inguar, who called, and waved his hand to him at a distance.

"Ho ! Kenric, whither now ?" inquired the Swede.

"Rejoice with me !" cried Kenric, hastening towards him; "rejoice that I have yet some justice left. 'Tis over now, and I am quite at peace."

"'Tis peace of a tumultuous kind," said Inguar, "that sets thee moving at such panting speed as this."

"I gasp for it, I do but taste the draught," said Kenric; "I have not yet drank deep."

"What dost thou mean ?" said Inguar.

"The war," replied the scholar, "the war within my breast is at an end, but it is yet too soon for perfect quiet. The contest, Inguar, grew too close and painful, but it is over now. I have given it up."

"Given what?" cried Inguar, with eagerness.

"Thy scheme—thy kindly meant but deadly scheme—thy scheme that, if fulfilled, would have secured my fortune, it may be, but plundered all the little peace I have."

"Thou art mad!" cried Inguar.

"No, no!" replied the youth. "I only now see clearly and think coldly. I feel not so, indeed, for love, and gratitude, and many a good affection, long imprisoned, are once more free and warm within my breast."

He was hurrying away, when Inguar seized his cloak.

"Stand here, thou fool!" he cried, "thou brainless fool!"

"I will not stand—I will not hear thee speak!" exclaimed the youth. "I know thou brewest some cursed poison for me, but I forewarn thee that I will not drink!"

"Thou'rt pledged to me, thou cheat!" cried Inguar.

"It was a pledge of sin and wrong," said Kenric. "I have a higher pledge to keep or perish!"

"Dost thou forget," cried Inguar, rising in wrath, "that I too suffer by thy foul desertion? that I am pledged besides?"

"It will be well for thee," cried Kenric, "if thou dissolve that pledge as I do thine."

"Yet hear me, Kenric, yet consider well. Yet Kenric——"

"No!" cried the young scholar, struggling in his grasp—"I will not hear thee speak. I know my part is flight—I know it well. No, Inguar, I know the luring poison of thy speech—the subtle, fatal venom of thy words. Well do I know thou canst make virtue vice, and falsehood truth; but thou shalt never do so more for me. I will hear nothing from thee; I will consider

nothing at thy bidding, for I have proved thee a bad counsellor!"

"Thou shalt not go!" cried Inguar, springing on him, with a face almost infuriate with rage. Kenric struggled for freedom, but the hard vigour of the stranger made his efforts for a long time useless. They rolled together on the ground, and the Swede succeeded in securing the advantage. He pressed one knee upon the scholar's breast, and held him to the earth—while his eyes flashed with baffled hate, and the angry foam appeared between his teeth.

"Beware of what thou doest," said Kenric. "Let go thy hold, I warn thee! I have a way to make thee do it."

With these words he endeavoured to slip the Gaulish dagger from his girdle, at which the stranger started, and made an effort to seize the weapon. The girdle burst, and came away in his hand—but in the attempt he lost his hold of Kenric. The latter, throwing all his force into one vigorous effort, heaved off the stranger from his breast, and hurled him to a distance on the grass. More nimble than his enemy, he was on his feet in an instant, and so far beyond his reach that the latter did not even offer to pursue him.

CHAPTER LXIV.

IN the mean time, Elim, recovering from the effect of his first surprise at Kenric's resolution, followed, as nearly as he could conjecture, the path which the latter had taken. The way, however, was not certain, and thus it happened that, until Inguar had departed, Elim did not arrive at the spot on which the struggle had taken place. Great were his alarm and his surprise at observing the evident

vestiges of recent combat in the trampled condition of the sod; and greater still at finding Kenric's girdle and the dagger. Folding them within his garment, he returned towards the Rath, where, after instituting the strictest search throughout his territory, he was compelled to remain unsatisfied.

The vessel in which Kenric sailed pursued its voyage along the iron-bound range of coast that breaks the western surge of the Atlantic. The intention of the young scholar was, to accompany the fishermen the whole length of their voyage into the mouth of the Sionann, and to the city of Ships, where his acquirements might procure him some present mode of independent subsistence. It had cost him a violent effort to make this sacrifice, all necessary as it had become, and he had not yet felt all the natural pain of the privation, for the occupation by which the effort of self-conquest was succeeded, prevented his reflecting much upon it. In the evening the little vessel cast her anchor on the leeward of the wild and craggy Scéiligs; and here it was resolved to wait the light of the returning morn, in order to continue their course with more security. The men were unwilling to leave their cargo, but Kenric resolved to look out for some more commodious resting-place on shore. Accordingly, he landed on the greater isle, and walked up the sloping ascent which led towards its shattered peak. It was a calm and lovely sunset, and Kenric turned from the height to look across the tranquil waters, in the direction of Inbher-scelne. The lonesome nature of the scene, heightened by the solitary cry of the gannet on the crags above him, the thought of his friendless condition, of the companions he had left, of all that he had lost both at home and elsewhere, now came together on his mind, and oppressed it so much that he could not forbear sitting down to indulge his grief. What now was to supply to him the loss of an intimacy so full of happiness as that which he had lost!

What occupation, what pursuit was now to fill his time—his weary time? Without an object in the future, or an enjoyment in the present, how was he now to make the moments light? Such were the thoughts and feelings that afflicted him as he sat beneath the crags, and the sense of his desolation increased at length to a degree extremely painful. In this situation he remained until the declining twilight warned him that it was time to seek a lodging, if he wished to avoid spending the whole night in the open air. Ascending the slope a little higher, his glance fell, at a turn of the rock, on one of those lonely hermitages which were scattered in these days throughout the whole of Europe. It was a low building of brown freestone, in the form of a parabola, the only aperture appearing to be a small doorway in one end, but unprovided with either board or wicket.

There did not appear to be any other dwelling in the place, nor indeed, except for the purposes of religious retirement, did it appear likely that any one would select this lonesome crag as a place of residence. While he was examining the curious dove-tailing of the stones which formed the building, he was startled by the sound of a voice from the crags which overhung the hermitage, and which, accompanied by the sound of a cruit, sung, in a manner rendered peculiarly agreeable by the stillness of the scene and hour, the following stanza of a song which Kenric imagined he had somewhere heard before:

*So firm be thy merit.
So changeless thy soul,
So constant thy spirit,
While seasons shall roll.
The fancy that ranges
Ends where it began,
But the mind that ne'er changes
Brings glory to man.*

After some effort, the Northumbrian called to mind that he had heard these words, while he stood by Vusfræa's side, in the convent yard of Muingharid, on the first morning of his arrival at the abbey. While he listened for the repetition of the strain which conveyed, in a manner so charming, a counsel of which he stood peculiarly in need, the solitary, a man of more than middle age, dressed in a garment of the coarsest woollen stuff, and bearing, like most members of the religious orders, a small cruit hung around his neck, passed him with a silent reverence. He was about to enter the little building, when Kenric accosted and made him acquainted with the object which had tempted him to land upon the island. Great was the astonishment of the Northumbrian, as he spoke, to recognize, in the countenance of the old man, the features of one of the choristers of Muingharid, who had come to end his days in this retirement. The latter, with difficulty, was made to remember the Northumbrian disciple, and offered him the shelter of his cell, which, he said, was the only inhabited spot upon the island. The proposal was accepted by Kenric, who, in the course of the evening, made the solitary acquainted with a part of his past adventures, and with his present intention of returning to take up his residence at Deochain Neassan. His aged host, who seemed changed no less in mind than in his person, furnished him with the necessary instructions for obtaining success in his scholastic pursuits in the city. They soon after lay down to rest upon their rush beds, and Kenric, after the fatigue and agitation of the day, enjoyed an unbroken sleep until the sun was risen.

He arose early, with fresh and active spirits, and a mind entirely quiet and serene. The morn was as calm and beautiful as the evening had been; the sun was shining cheerily, and Kenric, perceiving that his host had already left the cell, walked out by the sea-shore, to en-

joy, with a keen and vigorous delight, the sweetness of the early breeze, the brilliant aspect of the sun-streaked ocean, the cries of the busy sea-fowl, and the exhilarating odour of the coast. Beneath him, heaving gently at her cable, appeared the little vessel in which he had approached the island.

The change which had taken place in his own feelings, astonished him still more than he was pleased by the tranquil scene around him. Never since his boyhood had he enjoyed such peace, such pure serenity of spirit. All tumult, all strife, was at an end within his breast; his heart was no longer divided; he had embraced his part, and bitter as the draught had been at first, and arduous the effort of decision, all now was happily concluded, and nothing remained but the delicious rest of conquered passion.

While he continued to enjoy, with strange delight, a feeling such as he had never before experienced, he observed the solitary returning, with his implements of husbandry, towards the cell, from the height on which his garden lay.

Kenric greeted his host, and, at his request, agreed to partake of his morning repast in the cell. While they were seated, a curach touched upon the island, and a stranger landed, whom Kenric shortly found to be a relative and frequent visitor of the solitary. With this person, after he had taken leave of the old hermit, and as they walked down the slope which led to the beach, the young scholar entered into conversation on the nature of the life which his kinsman led in so solitary a place, and expressed his admiration of the fortitude which enabled him to support a course of life so toilsome, and yet so barren of the common end of toil—enjoyment.

"It seems so to us, who know nothing of it, but I believe it is not so," said the stranger. "Without speaking at all of the motive that cheers and lightens it, I

might venture to say truly, that there is no life on earth so happy as my kinsman's. He has no cares upon his mind; his line of duty is simple and regular; one thought, one wish, one hope, engrosses all his faculties, and he finds no impediment in cultivating that. Without having any natural talents for exerting a commanding influence in society, it is much to be questioned if the simple unobtrusive light of so serene an example of virtue does not effect more good than many a brilliant genius; for say what you will, men never think you thoroughly in earnest until they see you practise what you teach. My kinsman is naturally stupid, with the exception of his slender skill in music, and was obliged in youth, from absolute incapacity, to discontinue the ordinary studies of his colleagues. He bore those mortifications with an unvarying good humour, and notwithstanding his want of learning, in the course of his life obtained so high a character for sound discretion, that he is consulted in his solitude, on the most important affairs, by men who far surpass him both in genius and acquirement. He rises in the morning at a certain hour—a certain time at his religious duties—a certain time in his garden—a certain time at his meals and necessary recreation, and then a certain time to rest again. A life like this, neither indolent nor solicitous, without an hour unprovided with its customary duty, and all falling in their harmonious course, does not leave a chink for either vice or selfishness to fasten in. What he does seems painful, but the pain is sweetened by a tranquil conscience—the restraint seems rigorous, but it is softened by the strongest hopes. We all despise him, and he smiles at us, and with the better reason."

By this they had reached the shore, and Kenric, after bidding farewell to the stranger, re-embarked on board the fishing vessel.

CHAPTER LXV.

ARRIVED in the city of Luimneach na Long, Kenric found less difficulty in acquiring that condition of independence, without which no honourable or conscientious mind can feel at rest, than when he journeyed first into East-Anglia. He attained, with little disappointment as to time, the office of Lector in one of the schools in Deochain Neassan,* where he was easily recognized by many of the teachers. Remembering there the hermit of the Scéiligs, his first care was to lay down, with exactness, the rule of life which he proposed to follow, dividing his time into regular portions for the due fulfilment of his purpose. Independent of those hours which his duties in the school demanded, a considerable time was to be devoted daily to the study of the history of Inisfail, of which he had obtained a glimpse from Elim; its laws, its so much prized, yet now so little known, scholastic literature; its natural peculiarities, and the origin and character of its people. Those who have known what it is to enter on a life of innocence and regularity, from one of turbulence and passion, may conceive something of the happiness which the young scholar enjoyed during the month which succeeded his being established within the city. His walks were pleasant, his hours of tuition and of study serene and quiet, his recreations salutary and delicious, his sleep sound and peaceful, his heart released from passion, and his mind healed of that feverish and inquisitive folly, the fruit of discontent and pride, which had in him turned knowledge, the food of the mind, into a poison deadly to its peace.

But conscience, once triumphant in his breast, was no

* See Note 19.

to be appeased with half a conquest. It was not long before he found in his new occupation too powerful a remembrancer of home and of his boyhood to leave his thoughts at rest upon this point. He often thought of his last parting with Domnona on the bridge, and the same worn face and low and hurried voice invaded his dreams so frequently, that he began at length to find the night unwelcome. He strove to quiet his mind by reasoning on the justice of his cause, but never, in his most impassioned moments, had he been fully satisfied of this; then wherefore should he now, when he had grown almost too wise to be proud any longer? still, while he reasoned, he found that conviction did not bring him peace, and that it was one thing to reason, and another to be rational.

The peace, the holy calm, the smiling and celestial industry that filled these shades, had rather a reproachful than a soothing influence on Kenric's mind, for they reminded him most forcibly of what he had been himself when he studied here with Elim, and showed him, in a plainer, deeper contrast, the alteration in his character. In these sanctified abodes, all seemed at once at rest and active, diligent and peaceful; the countenances of the inhabitants were illumined by a perpetual calm of mind, their voices sounded ever kindly and sweetly, the tones of anger never grated on the ear, the voice of blame came seldom, and with more of grief than wrath in its expression, a cheerful humility regulated the demeanour of the community, and never, never, among these simple-hearted children of virtue, was the mind offended by the hateful sneer, the sign at once of weakness and of pride.

On an evening in autumn, Kenric walked towards the river side to enjoy his customary exercise. As he passed the outskirts of the city of letters, his ear was greeted by the sound of one of those rude Welsh harps, whose horse-hair strings he had been once accustomed to hear with

such delight in Northumberland. The air likewise was one of those melodies to which his ear had been accustomed in his childhood, and the words he had often heard his mother sing in the midst of her daily occupations:

Summer is a coming in,
Loud sings cuckoo!
Groweth seed,
And bloweth mead,
And springeth the wood new!*

The song and its accompaniment, all rude as they might sound in the ear of an accomplished crotarie, were dear and touching to the heart of Kenric, but so startling withal, that instead of turning to accost his wandering countryman, he hurried away to the river, and, as if fearing to be recognized, walked along its sedgy winding bank until the voice and instrument were both unheard. He could not, however, banish from his mind the single verse which he had caught in passing. It haunted him to his lodging, and he dreamed Domnona sang it to him all the night. In the morning it mingled with the tolling of the convent bells; it pursued him to his daily occupations, and again, when he went to rest at night, the same sweet English voice seemed still to haunt his pillow with the same wild words:

Summer is a coming in,
Loud sings cuckoo!
Groweth seed,
And bloweth mead,
And springeth the wood new!

It would be difficult for one, who has not been similarly situated, to imagine with what force this simple

* The song, of which this forms the opening stanza, is supposed to be the oldest in the English language. The reader will pardon an anachronism so inconsiderable as its introduction here.

verse brought back to Kenric's mind the recollection of his Northumbrian meads and woods, and the aspect of the opening summer in his native land. In a word, his mind was wholly filled with the thoughts of home, and his breast with a lonesomeness and longing that amounted at times to anguish.

CHAPTER LXVI.

ON the following evening he walked in the same direction, and heard the sound of the same instrument, but to a different air and words. It was a Cambrian melody, and the words he well remembered to be an effort of his own early skill at Muingharid. The young scholar, instead of passing on as before, now staid to listen to the music and to observe the figure of the minstrel. In the dress of a different tongue, the following might bear some resemblance to the words he sang:

I.

While the stars of heaven are shining,
 Ar hyd a nos,
Here at midnight lone, reclining,
 Ar hyd a nos,
Fancy flies to those wild bowers,
Sunny fields and springing flowers,
Where I passed my infant hours,
 Ar hyd a nos.

II.

To my own belovéd mountains,
 Ar hyd a nos,
Rushing streams and quiet fountains,
 Ar hyd a nos.

Sleepless, still my thoughts returning,
 Leave my lonely bosom mourning,
 And my heart within me burning,
 Ar hyd a nos.

III.

There light slumbers blessed my pillow,
 Ar hyd a nos,
 There beside the star-lit billow,
 Ar hyd a nos,
 Visions soft to me were given,
 Pure as mountain winds at even,
 Peace for earth and hope for heaven,
 Ar hyd a nos.

IV.

Still that Sabbath bell is ringing,
 Ar hyd a nos,
 Still that Sabbath choir is singing,
 Ar hyd a nos ;
 Sounds belovéd ! Oh, restore me
 With the scenes ye bring before me,
 Hopes that then hung blooming o'er me,
 Ar hyd a nos.

Long ere the song had ended, Kenric had, with an astonishment easy to be conceived, recognized the countenance of the wanderer to be that of Webba, the Cambrian servant of his aged uncle and tutor, who thus seemed now endeavouring to procure a subsistence by exercising the trade of a wandering minstrel. The reader may imagine with what feelings it was that Kenric learned from this person that his second refusal to submit himself into his father's hands had been followed by the death of his mother, the too affectionate Domnona. His severe, but kind-hearted uncle Vuscfraëa, on the morning after the funeral, had taken Webba apart, and after informing him by what means he might make his way to that part of Inisfail where Elim, Kenric's friend, resided, ad-

vised him to assume his present minstrel trade, in order to facilitate his journey, "Go find him," said the grey-haired instructor; "go find the wretched rebel, and tell ple fof the murder he has done; bear him no message; him him no advice; but tell the miserable dupe the sim-give act, and let it do its own work on his heart. It would be to defile good counsel to waste it on a mind so lost as his."

"Did my mother," asked Kenric, when Webba had got thus far in his narrative, "did my mother leave me no message, do you know?"

"She died a sudden death," was Webba's answer.

"Indeed!" said Kenric, turning pale as a corpse; "well, Webba, what besides?"

The servant proceeded to inform him that Ailred, his father, was greatly changed, and indeed not for the better, since Domnona was taken from his fireside. He still continued, however, to lead the same life as before, to serve the duke in the day-time, and amuse himself over his ale and the game of *tœfl* by night, more freely now than ever.

A dismal horror seized on Kenric's mind the instant that he had heard those dreadful tidings. The contemplation of such an event as his mother's death, had never once, in all his vicissitudes, occurred to his mind, and new and awful was its influence. He hurried to his lodging, bidding Webba follow, and remain until he should have leisure to attend to a more full detail of those unhappy circumstances. As soon as he was in his chamber, he cast himself upon the rushes, and lay still as death in thought. A deep fit of reflection fell upon him, and he remained for several hours, almost motionless, on the rude bed, in passive subjection to the tyranny of fearful recollections. He thought of flying now at length to the feet of his widowed parent, and he called Webba into his room at midnight to ask him whether he thought it

likely, in such a case, that his father could forgive and receive him. The latter had his own reasons for apprehending otherwise; because he had often, since Domnona's death, heard Ailred attribute all his present desolation to Kenric and his scholarship. Still, however, he rather encouraged him to make the trial, of which he thought no harm could come at any rate.

But his deep-rooted and long-cherished pride was not to be so easily dislodged as the more recent passion had been. Grief, fear, and deep remorse assailed him alternately, day after day, and urged him, with unceasing instances, to humble himself before his desolate parent, and to make a reparation, full, though late, for his long desertion. But often as the draught was offered to his lips, and strong as were the motives to induce him to comply, it still was gall and wormwood to his taste, and he refused to drink it. Not even his filial affection, now strongly awakened by the lonely condition of his parent, was sufficient to subdue the bitterness it had for a heart so long and deeply vitiated. At one time his reason would accord a full assent, and in the next his breast would swell and darken at the thought of Ailred rejecting him in his prostrate condition. An empty fancy was sufficient to disgust him, though his heart reproached him often with the injury he did to Ailred by these thoughts. "Even should he fail to do his duty, Kenric, it will be well for thee if thou do thine," was the thought in which those discussions generally concluded, but still his heart was stubborn and resisted.

Day after day the truth became more clear to his own mind, but yet he loitered, and was reluctant in the accomplishment of what his better judgment taught him to be necessary. A week rolled by, and still he had not resolved on taking the first backward paces of his long and luckless journey.

CHAPTER LXVII.

ONE good effect, at least, this mournful change produced. It made all other duties light to Kenric. The severest discipline, the closest application to his necessary pursuits, the utmost exactness as to time, the most rigid course of self-denial, all appeared smooth and easy in comparison with the humiliating step which his conscience demanded, and he wondered wherefore it was that while he went beyond so many in his actions, his heart did not enjoy their peace.

But here again his conscience did not long continue silent. "Thou most unwise!" it whispered in his breast. "Thou art doing more than would make many virtuous, and thou art doing all in vain! Thou givest what is not asked of thee, and thou refuseth the only thing that is! Thou utter fool! Infatuate Kenric! I give thee but one counsel, and thou seemest to follow a thousand. I say, 'return to Ailred,' and thou redoublest thy diligence. I say 'return to Ailred,' and thou closest thy breast against all pleasure. I say, 'return to Ailred,' and thou actest, sufferest, dost all, except return to Ailred. Down with this Babel, Kenric, which confounds my language. Down with this Babel, pride, or it will fall and crush thee."

In the midst of these reflections, Kenric, who almost daily walked to Luimneach, for the purpose of conversing with the traders from the south, was surprised to find that the alarm of war had rather died away than increased on the coast. Unable to ascertain the cause of this prolonged delay to the design of Baseg, which seemed, when he had been invited to the Coom, to be only retarded by the temporary absence of the Vikingr, he gave up all thought of it, and pursued, without interruption, his customary duties at Deochain Neassan.

He had kept Webba at his lodging, unwilling that the latter should return until he had brought his mind to resolve upon some decided course with respect to the message of his uncle. Sometimes he caught so eagerly at anything in the shape of an argument to justify his remaining, that he would urge, in the hearing of Webba, in terms of the silliest levity, the excellence of his prospects here in Inisfail as a reasonable obstacle to his return.

"Thou seest Webba," he would say, "how I am tethered in this place. Thou seest, also (not to speak it in vanity), the honour I am paid amongst the people. Without talking folly, Webba, which I despise, I may confide to thee that there are few in Deochain Neassan more honoured than myself; and fewer still who have better reason to look forward with confidence for fortune still more brilliant than I have earned already. Thou dost not understand these matters, and I do not love the appearance of boasting, so that I shall be silent altogether, except that it be just to hint to thee, that to resign Deochain Neassan, at present, would be to resign a burst of literary splendour and renown, such as the age, perchance, might find it hard to match. But this is folly. What I would have you bear in mind is this: that there are solid motives for my stay, such as, I make no doubt, my father would himself admit to have their weight."

To these remarks the Northumbrian servant, who had no head at all for disputation, would only reply by a smile and head-shake, or by saying that he knew that Vusefræa would be glad to see him, with all the hardness of his speech, or that it was a sin to see the house of Ailred going, as it was, to wreck and ruin, in his absence.

A struggle like that which Kenric had been now so long maintaining in his breast could not continue forever undecided. The state of strife, always an unnatural condition, could not be otherwise in him, and according as

his resistance was protracted, his heart began to feel less difficulty in subduing its occasional remorse. The memory of his mother's death became more faint, the thoughts of home began to lose their influence, and his prospects of advancement at Muingharid, which were indeed as favourable as they were seductive, began to occupy his mind, and to fill it as full as ever with his old conceits.

And now again his days grew active, and his labour incessant. The reputation of his genius and his industry had spread about the place, and many deemed they saw a rising star of learning and of science in Kenric. His acquirement astonished the aged, and the young were delighted by his eloquence.

In the midst of these occupations, which soon became absorbing, he was one morning surprised by Webba's entering his apartment, and asking him whether he had any commissions for his native place, as he did not himself desire to remain in this strange country any longer.

"And, wherefore, Webba?" inquired the scholar, "hast thou not everything to make it agreeable to thee?"

"Everything, Kenric, except that it is not Northumberland," answered Webba, "beside, Vuscfraea would marvel at my staying."

"Well, well," said Kenric, "and sure thou art not bound to him? He did not buy thee, did he?"

The servant smiled earnestly, and shook his head. "It is true, Kenric," said he, "Vuscfraea never was my master that way—but—but—I do not choose to leave him on that account. He was more than a master to me; my own father could not care more for me than he always did, and I must go back to him."

"Thou art a strange being," said Kenric. "Vuscfraea, in the common course of things, cannot continue long to be thy master. He is very old, and must be now grown weak and almost bed-ridden, and he has nought to leave thee when he dies."

"I know not how it will be, Kenric," replied Webba; "I shall not be worse off than when Vuscfraa took me first, and if I be not able to live, I can die."

"Thou errest, be assured," said Kenric, vexed at he scarce knew what; "such generosity is perfectly unreasonable. Gratitude is a good thing, no doubt, but then we owe a duty to our own interests which it is a folly, and not a virtue, to neglect."

Webba smiled again, and seemed for some time hard at work to discover why it was that this reasoning did not satisfy his mind. As he reflected on the matter, his thoughts were set to work so forcibly that his face grew red, and the perspiration began to appear upon his brow.

"I do not know, Kenric," he said at length; "it seems all very true what thou hast told me—but—in truth, son of Ailred," he continued, suddenly changing his tone, "I have but a poor brain for arguing, only I know I wish to go back to Vuscfraa, and I can't help it. For being poor, I do not much mind that, for I am used to it, thou knowest, so long a while, that I do not feel it. If I were of gentle blood and fortune indeed, perhaps (heaven forgive me) I might stay. But it is heaven's will that I should serve my master."

Kenric was irritated, he knew not wherefore, at the simple-minded perseverance of the attached domestic. "Perverse!" he exclaimed, with harshness, "it is not as thou sayest. Thou art more cunning than thou wouldst pretend."

Webba seemed, as he was, utterly at a loss, to judge what now was running in the head of Kenric.

"Thou art daring and presumptuous, both," cried Kenric, increasing in irritation, "and thou wouldst erect thyself into a censor of my conduct!"

"Me, Kenric!" exclaimed Webba, in amazement, "me erect myself! me censure!"

"It is so—I see it," answered Kenric. "Is nature

weaker in my breast than gratitude should be in thine? Thou pratest of thy love and thy attachment to make my conduct take the look of coldness! Thou dost, thou hypocrite!" he continued, bursting into a paroxysm of rage, "thou daring, subtle hypocrite!"

Poor Webba, who was the last person in the world that could be accused of subtlety, was utterly astonished and distressed at what he heard.

"Oh, master!" he exclaimed, extending his hands and eyes—"Kenric! Oh, master! Son of Ailred! Kenric! Me blame the greatest scholar in Muingharid?" here he crossed himself devoutly, and with a look of fear; "me sell my soul to the fiend of pride in that way? So clever a master! so rare a scholar! so wise a youth as Kenric! One that, they say, can read the stars themselves! Oh, Kenric! Oh, dear master! Oh, not so, thou son of Ailred! Thou hast plentiful wit, and books, and all, to guide thee, so thou knowest thou must be right; I have little thought or learning to be led by; but there is a ship for Mercia lying in the port of Luimneach, and I want to go back to my old master."

"Get thee gone, and be dumb!" cried Kenric, thrusting him from the room with passion; then, suddenly recollecting himself, as he heard Webba leaving the house, he snatched a purse from a secret place, and hurried after him.

"Here," he said, thrusting the money, a considerable sum, into his hand, "you may want some assistance on the road."

Webba, the instant he discovered what it was, refused the money quietly, but firmly. He would take nothing: Vusfræa should not say he sought his nephew to enrich himself; he would go as he came. Kenric, impatient, dashed the money on the earth, and returned hastily to his lodging.

"The money must not be lost, at all events," said Web-

ba, picking it out of the mud, and stepping aside into a private place, until he saw a mendicant approach: "Here," said he, after glancing on all sides, to see that nobody observed him, "here—but stop till I have made it clean for thee," he added, wiping it in a corner of his mantle, then placing it in the hand of the poor beggar. "Take this," said he, "for the good of the owner's soul."

He then pursued his way toward the spot where Kenric first had heard and recognized him. Then tuning up the horse-hair strings of his rude harp, he resumed the outward character of the trade by which he had supported himself during his toilsome journey to Deochain Neassan, and departed from its precincts, humming over his favourite national melody:

Summer is a coming in,
Loud sings cuckoo,
Groweth seed,
And bloweth mead,
And springeth the wood new.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

On the following evening, Kenric, greatly disturbed in mind, went out to walk beside the broad and calm Sionann. Since the departure of Webba, his uneasiness had been so great that he found it impossible to perform his duties with the same regularity as before. His head was aching from reflection, his breast burned, and his very limbs were feverish from distress of mind. In this miserable condition he sat down upon the bank, in hopes that the sweetness of the evening landscape might give some rest to his mind. As his reflections continued, better dispositions began to wake within him. He took an altered

view of the conduct of Vusefræa's servant, and was strongly inclined to become the companion of Webba's voyage. He formed, at all events, the resolution, as soon as the fortunes of his Ithian friend should be decided, to end, at any sacrifice, this state of unnatural alienation from his parent, and to give to his native valley the advantage of his acquirement and his industry.

In this condition he sat on the shores of the island, on which that part of Luimneach,* then called the City of Strangers,† stood in its earliest days, but which is now scarce better than a ruined and neglected suburb. Before him flowed one branch of the divided Sionann, winding softly from the bosom of the distant mountains, and sweeping gracefully by the towers and ramparts of the fortified city. While he meditated thus, with his eyes fixed upon the sunlit hills of Clair, and the low peillices which occupied the shores, now cumbered with many a costly edifice, he was startled by the galloping of troops in the streets behind him. On inquiring, he was informed that large subsidies had been levied by Artri, in all the provinces, to strengthen the state against the northmen, who had dared to enter the very mouth of the Sionann; and that the horsemen he had seen were the Dal Cassian body set apart for this purpose. There was much tumult and hurrying to and fro of people in the streets, and general expressions of alarm and curiosity. In the shop of a brog-maker stood a woman quieting a child, and devouring the news of a neighbouring ceannuighe, who was describing, with terrific emphasis, the dress, the size, the weapons, and the ferocious manners, of the expected foe.

"The prayers of the sainted Mainchen be our shield!" said he; "the learned, and men of parts, who have the best right to know, say that it was never woe with Christendom till now. If the herrings became ships they

* See Note 53. Luimneach, or Limerick.

† Baile Gallda, now called the English town.

could not muster thicker on the seas than those wild northern pirates, that never knew what it was to swallow a morsel earned by their own honest industry. Neither man nor woman nor child ever yet found pity from a northman; and the wisest in the country say, that it will be a woeful day for Inisfail, for hundreds of years to come, the first that saw their keels upon our coasts."

On the following day, prayers and masses were offered up in all the churches for the deliverance of the island from this fearful scourge. Being Holy Thursday, the churches were illuminated at evening, and Kenric mingled with the crowds who thronged the city, entering in various directions, some from the northern principalities of Tuath Mumhain,* and others by the bridge which communicated with the Baile Gaoidhealach, at present called the Irish-town.

Having spent some time in witnessing the splendid ceremonies of the evening, Kenric made his way over the bridge last mentioned, and hastily turned his steps along the bank of the Sionann, in the direction of Muingharid, considering how far these tidings might affect his Ithian friend. The twilight woods in which the college was embosomed had arisen on his view, when he paused to meditate awhile upon the news which he had heard.

"The Nordman, then, it seems," he said, in his own mind, "has returned to keep his word, and now a struggle must commence in which O'Haedha's happiness and hers must be involved, while I must take no part against or for them. I am a miserable wretch—I am always miserable! First duped—then undeceived—to be duped again more dreadfully than ever! Deceitful Inguar! I had almost quelled all lingering thoughts of this, until thou camest to light the fire afresh with thy deceitful promises! Thy flattering promises, that always—always end in three-fold

* Afterwards Thomond.

disappointment! Was it for this that I almost consented to do violence to the only feeling I had to support me in that struggle—my gratitude, my fervent gratitude to Elim? Oh, would that I had never left my father's house! Misery on misery, and worse than misery, has been augmenting daily ever since! Deceitful Inguar! If it were not for thee, I might be now once more the loved inmate of Domnona's dwelling. If it were not for thee, I might rejoice this moment in the approaching happiness of Elim! I cannot rejoice—no—no—I cannot now—my heart is black within me with its own selfish disappointment, and and for this, along with all, I have to thank thee, Inguar!”

Scarcely had he uttered these words, when, as if the Flying Vidar of his own Valhalla had bestowed upon him his supernatural speed, the form of the Scandinavian appeared upon the lofty bank of the Sionnann on which he sat. Notwithstanding the circumstances under which they had parted, Kenric, in the present unfixed condition of his mind, was not displeased at his appearance. A month before he would have fled his sight like that of a basilisk, and even now he started at the sight of him—but he did not fly, although he thought of it.

“We are met again,” said Inguar, with a winning and a smiling look.

“We are,” said Kenric.

“It would be strange,” continued Inguar, “if a friendship such as ours had terminated in a manner so abrupt. Thou hast cooled since then.”

“I have had time to cool,” said Kenric.

“And so had I,” returned Inguar, “and I am sorry now that I ever needed it. It was the heat of a madman, but a heat that had its origin in love, not enmity. I am glad that we have met, for I longed to tell thee this—to tell thee I am sorry for my violence.”

He paused, but Kenric continued to gaze upon him, without making any reply.

"Let us forget that maniac hour," said Inguar, "it was unworthy of our long-tryed friendship. Let us be friends once more; at least let us suspend all enmity. Why," he added, with a look of smiling frankness, "why dost thou hesitate? If I were violent to thee, thou wert no lamb, I warrant, in my hands. My bruised side and aching limbs for many days gave testimony against thy forbearance."

Kenric continued, with a suspicious but wavering look, to draw his mantle close around his shoulders, and stand apart with a reserved air.

"Trust me," said Inguar, "this mystery of wisdom is superfluous. I wear neither dagger nor sword, nor have I even a gift to fright thee with. When last we met, indeed, I had a project, which, but for thine own folly, would have made my friend the thing that nature formed him for—a being to command, not to obey—to rule, not serve—to enjoy, not suffer—a star to shine in the firmament of empire, and not a buried gem to lie hid in the mine of servitude—a freeborn spirit, not a bitted slave; but now the opportunity is lost, the hour of fortune slipped away in vain: 'tis gone—and let it go."

"I do not grieve for that," said Kenric.

"Nor I," rejoined his friend; "'twere useless. But say for what hast thou to thank me now? I came in time to receive the expression of thy gratitude."

"My thanks," replied Kenric, in anger, "are not of the kind thou lovest to receive. They are thanks such as men pay in their hearts for blasted hopes and cheated confidence."

"What blasted hopes?" said Inguar, descending from his elevation, and slowly approaching Kenric. "What cheated confidence? thou silly—silly boy! Thou always breakest thy toys, and murmurest at the giver. I never trimmed a garden for thy pleasure, that thou didst not thyself destroy its order, and then upbraid me with thy

scattered flowers. Thou selfish and repining boy, what evil hast thou lately done to thine own happiness, that I must once again repair in vain?"

"In vain," said Kenric, "thou hast justly said it, for every seeming good thou dost is false and perishing. Thy gifts are all of them delusive. They look brighter than the day in thy speech, but their end is darkness, failure, grief, and anguish of heart."

"Well—rail, and ease thy heart," said Ingvar; "in that way also I can be thy friend. But when thou art content, inform me what new injury I have added to all my former malice."

"I would," said Kenric, "that, for evil or for good, I never had to thank or to upbraid thee. On the morning when I first beheld thee in Cair Lud, I was about to do what, had I done it, might have left me now a peaceful and a happy mind. I had failed in all my worldly and ambitious schemes. The sanguine heart, with which I sought East-Anglia, was changed to one of grief and low dejection. I had made no friends—the schools were closed against me, because there was none to guarantee my character and principle—I wanted everything, even food and drink, and raiment for my body. I well remember what my thoughts were then; I had resolved to return into Northumberland, to seek out my father's house, and sue for the protection of his roof once more. Why did I not pursue that wholesome thought? for oh, there are moments, Ingvar, in which I feel such thoughts are wholesome—when that painful spirit, which I cherish by the name of independence, puts on the look of pride, and resistance wears the hellish hue of disobedience. For three days earlier some good spirit had been warning me to take this step, and I had put the warning off until all hope beside was lost, until (as now appears) it was too late. Even while I heard thee urging on me the shelter of thy roof and the refreshment of thy board, and while

thou continuedst to load me with promises of fortune and of splendour, I could not keep the warning from my mind, I could not still that whisper in my heart. I thought in my own breast it would be better for me if I were able to continue my journey, than to accept assistance which might only hinder me from ever performing it. I felt that I must die, if I refused thy aid, and yet even then I thought it might be better for me to die than run the risk of changing my design : for thy promises and thy proposals sounded like those which my own fancy made, before I left my father's house, and I feared that they, like them, would prove deceptive. My fears were quite prophetic. Why didst thou save me from that happy death—that happy penitent death? Why didst thou press upon me that destructive hope—that funereal prosperity?"

"I came not here," said Inguar, "to listen to reproaches, but to act. I have not time to speak with thee at all, far less to waste in words without a use. But we may meet again. Where shall it be?"

"I care not," answered Kenric, "I have no good cause to wish that we should meet at all."

"Even be it so," said Inguar, "be it so. I am not so eager as to urge thee to it; but thou art deceived if thou think thou servest Elim by remaining, for Eithne is a captive in the Coom, and some ships of the Vikingr in the Sionann. Another moon will see the question ended."

Inguar rightly judged that this intelligence would effect a great alteration in Kenric's resolution. Stunning and unexpected as it was, it threw him wholly off his guard, and he betrayed his weakness by the multitude of hurried questions with which he overwhelmed the Swede. Inguar, however, declined affording any further information.

"And wherefore art thou here?" asked Kenric, when he had concluded.

"I have come," replied the Swede, "solely for the purpose of communicating these tidings to thyself from on board a portion of the fleet of the Vikingr, who are at present riding, as I have told thee, on the waves of the Sionann, almost within the view of Inis Cathaigh.* We are on the eve of action, and I must return with these allies to the Coom."

"Let us meet after sunset then," said Kenric, "I will do so much for thee in memory of former benefits."

CHAPTER LXIX.

THE moon had risen behind the mountains of Shior Muimhean, when Kenric, leaving the unwall'd city of letters, hastened to his appointment on the river-side. He hurried out into the fresh night air, and walking rapidly, soon found himself on the banks of the Sionann, near the northern outskirts of Deochain Neassan. A bright moon glanced upon the waters of the river, which were also spangled at intervals along the banks, and near the city of Luimneach na Long, by the rush-lights gleaming through the open wickets of the shielings, from the prows of the benighted curachs and fishing vessels on the stream, and in greater profusion around the walls of the water-girt city; giving, even to commercial reality, the charm and illusion of romance. The murmur of the town and city, heard distinctly in the dead calm, the hoarse noise which still arose from the peopled streets, and all the moonlight sounds by which he was surrounded, had that strange and altered air, to the unhappy scholar, which even the most familiar objects assume after the condition

* Scatterry Island.

of the mind has been changed by some new and strong emotion. He left his place, and walked listlessly along the bank. The eternal choir of Muingharid, with its solemn harmony of praise, rose plainly on his ear as he advanced, and he imagined, notwithstanding the distance, that the strain was the same which Elim and himself had heard together, on the morning of their first, and, to him, most painful, separation. But the sounds fell now upon an altered ear, and dropped into an altered heart. He remembered the difference of temper with which both had listened to the strain, and the difference of the sentiments which fell from both; and he ran rapidly over the train of their after lives, the separate character of which had been thus early marked, and since, for him, so mournfully sustained.

On their re-union Inguar had little difficulty in persuading the Northumbrian to accompany him on his way to Gleannamhnach, assuring him that he should not be urged to take any part in the struggle which was to follow.

While they spoke, a small curach, manned with a number of athletic figures in the attire of the country, but evidently of a foreign shape and physiognomy, glided under the bank on which they stood. They hailed, and were answered by Inguar, in a low voice, and with signs which seemed to have been pre-concerted. Inguar at once embarked, and Kenric followed, after sending word, by a student whom he met upon the bank, to the people of the house in which he dwelt, that he would not return to Deochain Neassan for several days.

The men, who were vigorous rowers, plied briskly at their labour, and they sped rapidly along in the moonlight, by the wooded and level shores of the Sionann, by the far seen hills of Abhainn og-Cearnaigh, and through the scattered islets of the Forghus. In the course of the voyage, Inguar gave his companion a more ample

detail of the circumstances which had taken place since his departure from the Coom. To Inguar's eye, the sight of the raven was a sight of joy revived, and he hailed its bloody beak and gloomy wings, when they appeared once more upon these coasts, as an omen of success in the project which they had in hand. The sea-warriors had already been introduced, in numerous and well-armed parties, to the Coom nan Druadh, where their strange attire, their large persons, lofty stature, their violent manners, and above all, the sanguinary character of their belief, which resembled in some points the Druidical doctrines,* while they went far beyond them in the license they held out to rapine, luxury, and bloodshed, produced a strong impression on the planet-worshippers, whose friendship they were urged to seek.

Towards sunset on the following day, as they passed the eastern point of that small bay which washed the oak-crowned shores of Corca-Baiseinn, the Northumbrian beheld, for the first time, riding in the inlet, an armed fleet of that terrific race, who were afterwards doomed to become so severe a scourge to Elim's country and his own. They consisted of near a hundred barks, of different sizes, and variously equipped; some being little better than a twelve-oared barge, while others, of loftier shape, and finished with a nicer care, accommodated no less than thirty banks of rowers. From the prow of that which lay about the centre, the light sea breeze at intervals unfolded, with a sluggish movement, the dreadful banner of the North—the raven, with his wings outspread, on a field of dingy azure. In the stern appeared a wolf, whose gilding seemed much injured by accident and weather, and on the top of the mast, from which the sails at present hung inactive, a brazen serpent indicated the direction of the wind. Around the ship of the Vikingr the Anglo-

* See Note 15

Saxon beheld several barks, but little inferior in size or equipment, and filled with men, some armed with skiolds and hauberks, leaving no part of the person visible but the blue and eager eyes that glanced incessantly from shore to shore, like those of ravened eagles on the wing for prey.

Others were equipped with leathern garments closely fitting, their persons protected by the huge skiold, which, it is said, often served the northern warrior for a house on land, and even for a boat at sea ; and armed with the ponderous battle-axe, whose strokes resounded, in succeeding centuries, from the stormy billows of the Skag-gerac to the sunny shores of the Adriatic gulf. On the sterns of all the larger vessels appeared a shark, a bear, a snake, or some other figure rudely carved, expressive of rapacity or violence, and all were provided with whale-hide cables, grappling-irons, and huge stones for the catapulta ; an instrument of destruction not wholly unknown even to those remote and uncivilized sea warriors.

It was with feelings of intense curiosity and emotion that Kenric found himself, for the first time, on board one of those piratical vessels whose fame had already filled the European coasts with terror ; and it was only when he gazed on their fierce and sea-washed visages, and called to mind what he had heard of their ferocious character in Gaul and elsewhere, that he perceived the imprudence of the step which he had taken. Soon after they had boarded the Vikingr's ship, Inguar left him for a few moments, in order to deliver to the latter the commission with which Baseg had entrusted him. As he returned, a scald, or northern harper, accosted him with a familiar air, and inquired when the fleet was like to sail. " At midnight," was the answer of Inguar, who had scarcely uttered the words, when his eye encountered the figure of a hoary-headed man, standing on the deck before him, not armed, like the warriors, but attired in garments some-

what resembling those of the scald, but costlier in material.

"Well, Inguar," said the old man, in the Swedish tongue, which Kenric's facility of acquirement had enabled him long since to learn from the former, "how long are we to rock at anchor here, while Baseg lingers in his plans?"

"At midnight, Servant of the Incendiary," said Inguar, bowing low in reverence, "at midnight the Vikingr's trumpet gives the signal for the deep."

So saying, he once more bowed profoundly, and rejoined the Northumbrian.

"This man," he said, "is the mighty Runner of Odin, the priest of the Vikingr's fleet. These, Kenric, are indeed a fleet of warriors. It is their pride to make the deep their home, and never to abide on land except for purposes of spoil and conquest."

At midnight the deep sound of the Vikingr's trumpet gave out the signal for hoisting anchor; and by the light of an unclouded moon, they glided by the shores of Corca Baiscinn into the open waters of the queen of Irish rivers. They doubled the precipitous headland of Ciar, and winding round the coast, pursued their voyage to the south; taking shelter in the bays and amongst the islands when the weather grew tempestuous, and using their oars and sails, without intermission, when the seas and skies appeared more prosperous. On the second day, leaving their larger vessels, with a small crew, at anchor, in one of the most deserted bays about Ross Ailithir, and embarking in the light and shallow curachs in which their descents were usually effected, a full spring tide wafted them swiftly up the narrow stream which glided seaward from the bosom of the Druid's Valley. When interrupted by shallows these skiffs were borne along the bank; and pursuing their journey thus, the following evening brought them within view of the opening retreat.

The sounds of martial music in the valley, together with the rapid movement of several armed bands, whom they beheld at a distance, descending the mountain sides, announced the forward state of the warlike preparations made by the thanist and his friends. The Vikingr, as they glided along the banks into the bosom of the vale, was received with shouts of welcome, and Kenric, following the Swede as he leaped on shore, was conducted by him through crowds of armed warriors, in various costumes, in the direction of the Dun.

CHAPTER LXX.

LET us, in the mean time, return to the Rath at Inbher-sceine, in order to explain what Ingvar has already said of the captivity of Eithne.

Ignorant of the events which had occurred to divide the interests of Elim and Tuathal, it may be easily conceived with what astonishment it was, within a short time after her arrival in the Coom, that she found herself forcibly seized, during an excursion along the shores of the lake (in no other company than that of Duach and her two female attendants), by a party of mounted hobbeler, whose uniform she easily recognized to be that of the Ard-Drai's sept. Duach and the handmaids were likewise roughly handled, and conveyed away in the same direction with their mistress. Still greater was the astonishment of the latter, when, on arriving in Tuathal's portion of the Coom, she found it crowded with armed men, with banners of strange devices, particularly around the bridge and Dun, which seemed to be held as a place of garrison, so great was the crowd of warriors in the place.

In the interior of the Dun, occupying the seat so often

filled by the deceased Ard-Drai, she beheld the bulky form and the malignant countenance of the aspiring thanist. Around him stood a number of fierce-looking men, some wearing dresses that in shape resembled that of Kenric the Northumbrian, with the fur bonnets and cross garters of the Anglo-Saxons; while others were armed with crooked swords, and shields of a small size. While she gazed with wonder and affright on the strange circle she beheld around her, the voice of Tuathal, whom she had not seen since her return, was heard outside, and presently the young Ard-Drai rushed into the Dun.

"They told me at the bridge," he said, looking around, "that—ah, poor Eithne, art thou there? Samhuin sees that thou art welcome to the Dun."

In the midst of her fear and confusion, the Ard-Drai's niece showed great joy at the sight of Tuathal.

"I am sure of it, Tuathal," she replied, "I am very sure of it. But why am I enforced in this strange way? What men are these who fill the Ard-Drai's house?"

"They are friends, Eithne," replied the Ard-Drai, moved by the earnestness and pathos of her accents.

"What friends, Tuathal?" continued Eithne, more anxiously. "To please what friends have I been violently seized like a foe, and bound like a prisoner on my father's land? Tuathal, why do you look down and seem disturbed? Tell me what friends are these? I fear them, for they do not look on me with friendly eyes. Tuathal, if this place is not to be my home, remove me from it quickly. Restore me my home, or to Rath-Aedain. I do not feel at ease amongst these men."

"Samhuin sees——" said Tuathal, still more moved.

"Samhuin sees that thou art but a child," muttered the thanist to himself; "let the maiden be removed as she desires," he added aloud to one of his attendants.

"Stand back," cried Tuathal, placing the point of his sheathed sword against the breast of the advancing Sax

on. "If thou touch but her robe, bright Bel shall see thy blood."

"Wherefore is this, Tuathal?" said the thanist. "Dost thou forget our league?"

"I do not, Baseg," answered the Ard-Drai, "but she is my kinswoman, and was the playmate of my childhood."

"I thank thee for that word, Tuathal," whispered Eithne. "I know some evil is on foot against me, but thou wilt not at least become a traitor."

"Let Bel declare," said Tuathal, "how much I marvel that I should ever think of thwarting thee."

"Wilt thou restore me to my home at once?" continued Eithne, pressingly. "Restore me to my friends, for these are not my friends, nor thine, I am certain. I charge thee to place me in my father's dwelling."

"I am a traitor if I see thee not restored this very even," said Tuathal, entirely discomfited. "I will order a guard of marcsuadh, with a banner of peace, to leave thee in thy house, or in the Rath, before the sunset. Whatever way our fortunes run in the Coom, thou shalt not be slain said at any rate."

"And this is thy regard for thy young kinswoman!" said Baseg, with a smile of pity and reproach; "to leave her in the hands of the usurping Ithian."

"The usurping Ithian!" repeated Eithne, suddenly starting, and losing colour, as if some fearful truth had suddenly darted on her mind. "Is it possible? Art thou so lost, Tuathal? Oh, yes, I know thee now, grey-headed man! but thou shalt find thy wiles as vain as thy imputations are untrue. The right of Elim has been confirmed at Teamair, and not a chief through all Leath Mogha but has long since declared his readiness to aid him in this quarrel. Tuathal, ah, Tuathal! must I number thee amongst the foes of Inisfail! Must I number thee amongst the enemies of Elim?"

"Samhuin sees—" exclaimed Tuathal, looking irresolute.

"Hear me, thou perverse maiden!" cried the thanist. "Thy blind affection for the usurper of my birthright would make thee be the accomplice of his injustice, and lure away my allies to his cause. But this is a question of right, and not of favour. I blame thee not, Tuathal, for feeling the affliction of thy kinswoman, but be not foiled like a boy by a woman's weapons. Remember, thou hast chosen thy part already, thou art pledged to me, and canst not break thine oath."

"Nay, nay," said Tuathal, shaking his head with a serious air, "that is the truth, indeed. I am pledged to thee, that must not be forgotten. A valiant use of the gen becomes not a chieftain so much as his fidelity."

"And hast thou no fidelity to keep," said Eithne, "to Elim and to me?"

"And that's true too," cried Tuathal, with a nod; "I have a kind of pledge to Eithne also."

"But not the same, Tuathal," added Baseg.

"No—not the same—no, surely, not the same," said the Ard-Drai, nodding again. "In truth," he cried, waving his hands, as if in perplexity, before him, "let Bel decide between you, for my poor brain is unequal to it. I have a pledge here and a pledge there. Eithne I love; and I am bound to Baseg; if I please one I shall pain myself, and if I please the other, I shall break my plighted word; so, between both, it would need a brehon's head to settle it."

"Let it be thus, Tuathal," said the thanist. "Leave Eithne to my charge for a few days, that I may place the truth before her plainly. Thou hast the power to punish, if I should betray my trust."

"No! hear him not, Tuathal," exclaimed Eithne, "do not commit me to his dreadful keeping. If thou wilt not restore me to my dwelling, at least I challenge thy pro-

section here. I do not ask a favour, but a right. The last Ard-Drai gave me to thy hands. His cairn is there within our very sight. If thou wilt dare, before those aged bones, to play the traitor to his dying trust, now give me to the keeping of the thanist."

Tuathal remained for some moments fixed in thought, and then addressed the thanist with more decision.

"Thou mayest receive her in thy charge," he said, "provided I may name the guard who are to be set for her protection."

"I pardon thy distrust," said Baseg, "and agree to the condition."

In vain did Eithne indignantly exclaim against this decree. She was borne away, Tuathal looking angry with himself, and yet without decision enough to contravene the order of the thanist. For several days she was suffered to remain in her own apartments in the Dun, with liberty only to walk in a small garden which lay between them and the river side. On the sixth evening, as she sat meditating her condition in a small grotto which bordered on the stream, the sounds of distant shouting and of warlike music in the vale excited her alarm and curiosity together. She had no means, however, of gratifying the latter, for none of the guard which Tuathal had appointed were permitted to approach or speak with her, and the Saxon attendants whom Baseg sent to prepare her food and supply her other wants, neither spoke nor understood the tongue of Inisfail. She heard, as the night fell, the sound of preparation in the Dun, and the voices of artificers hurrying to and fro, as if some festival was near at hand. She could obtain no information, however, from her attendants, and was compelled to spend a restless and unsatisfied night. During the whole of the two following days the sounds of music and rejoicing seemed to have increased, and Eithne thought she could detect the notes of instruments entirely strange to her ear,

and a character of equal novelty in the pieces which they played. In the twilight, as she stole out to the end of the garden, by which the river flowed more gently and more deeply, the deepened murmur of the sounds which filled the valley showed her that the number of its inhabitants had been augmented, still more than it had been when her captors hurried her so swiftly through the Coom. While she leaned over the pebbly shore, endeavouring to reach one of those flowers, called by the moderns the Bruges Rose, which here grew wild, as an indigenous shrub, the appearance of a human figure on the opposite side of the river attracted her attention. The place on which she stood was a point of ground forming the lower end of the small isle on which the Dun was built, and around which the river of the Coom divided. In this place, re-uniting again its parted waters, the stream formed a lake both wide and deep. More than half its surface was concealed from Eithne's view by a lofty crag, which formed the extreme point of the islet, yet not so perfectly that she might not discern the prows of two or three curachs riding at a distance, with a folded banner planted in the foremast, which, even though its device could not be discerned, she knew was not the ensign of the Hooded People. On the opposite side, directly in her view, arose, to a great height, a pile of crag on crag, so barren of all verdure that no living creature, not even a wandering goat, was seen amongst its broken points. Descending this dangerous precipice it was that Eithne first discerned the figure we have mentioned. Imagining that he might be some stranger, unacquainted with the perils of the place, which rendered it almost impossible to re-ascend the path when once the termination had been reached, the maiden waved her veil, with a motion that was intended to deter the stranger from approaching. On perceiving the signal, however, it seemed as if the latter understood it in the directly contrary sense, for he hastened down the

rocks, using extravagant gestures of delight and satisfaction. To the astonishment of Eithne, he paused not until he had reached the lowest part of the rude descent, a ledge of crag precipitous on all its sides except that by which it was connected with the mountain, and presenting to the water-side a lofty wall of granite. Pausing a moment, in order to look down the fearful steep, Eithne beheld the stranger take out the wooden pin which fastened his hooded cloak in front, and, rolling it in a bundle, bind it fast between his shoulders with his girdle. With an involuntary exclamation of affright, she then beheld him leap headlong from a rock, and dive, like an arrow, into the placid waters. Drawing back her hair from her eyes, as if her sight would have devoured its surface, and holding in her breath with keen suspense, she watched for the re-appearance of her desperate *chiamhain*,* for such his hooded cloak had now proclaimed him. The suspicion of self-destruction did not cross her mind, for that was an event at all times rare amongst the elastic spirits of Inis-fail; and, besides, the preparations made by the stranger were those of one disposed to gain the opposite shore by swimming. After a long interval, however, the dark head rose into the twilight almost at the centre of the basin, puffing away the water, and shaking the drenched locks that formed the coolun. Perceiving that the swimmer directed his course toward that part of the shore on which she stood, Eithne retired for a moment, in order to observe him well before she ventured to let herself be seen. With the strong and vigorous action of one accustomed to such exercise, the stranger soon approached the point of land, and emerging from the flood, stood for a time wringing his drenched garments, and looking around with an inquiring eye, while he spoke in broken soliloquy aloud:

“Not here! Samhuin† sees my disappointment! I

* Kinsman.

† See Note 15.

thought it was her form I saw but now, waving the veil from underneath the rock. Let Bel declare my grief !”

Scarce had he uttered the words, when Eithne, hurrying from the leafy screen, exclaimed, in a low voice:

“Duach ! what, Duach, is it thou, indeed ?”

“Child of Mogh Ruith ! oh, daughter of the snowy-haired Ard-Drai, (for wert thou not almost his child ?)” cried Duach, starting at her voice, and extending his huge arms as if he would have embraced her—“but no—” he added, suddenly closing them again, “thou must not touch me, for I am drenched as a fish, or as if I had risen from the city of youth, that lies, they say, at the bottom of the lake, with every comfort in abundance, except a little firing and sunshine. Well, I have seen what I have seen to-night. The lake is deep, and none but those who have been at the bottom can tell what may be seen there ?”

“Wonders enough, I doubt not, Duach,” answered Eithne, “but what brings thee here ? I thought thou wert a prisoner like myself.”

“Oh, daughter of Mogh Ruith !” cried the kern, still wringing the water from his flowing coolun, “it glads my heart to see thee, even in this way. Let fair Samhuin judge how cold the lake is ! A prisoner, Eithne, in thine own old dwelling ! Here in the garden the old Ard-Drai gave thee, and which these hands have tilled so oft ! The new Ard-Drai is not like the old. My own poor shieling is no more my home. Tuathal has given it for a place of coshering to a party of the ruffian Finn Geinte.”

“What sayest thou ? The sea-rovers in the Coom ?” cried Eithne, in renewed alarm. “I see it all ! It breaks upon me with terrific force. The traitor, Baseg, for he is a traitor, has leagued with this abhorred race of plunderers, and Tuathal has forgotten his allegiance, to join the horrible confederacy—to aid the foes, not only of unhappy Inisfail, but of all other lands, of all mankind

I see it now, I know what sounds they were I heard to-night in the Coom, what boats are floating yonder on the stream, and what the dreadful banner, whose rapacious emblem the very winds seemed fearful to unfold. Oh, Duach, I am trembling for our homes! The power of Baseg is beyond our strength, beyond even that of Tuathal, though I could gain him over to my wishes."

"Beyond our strength, perhaps," said Duach, shrewdly, "but not beyond our wit, if we but manage it. For me, I have beat them all at stratagem. I was indeed, a prisoner, as thou sayest, and closer kept in the Carcair na ngiall than thou art here in thy delicious garden. Yet here I am to see and speak with thee. I have slipped like an eel through the fingers of the guard Tuathal placed upon me; I have visited my poor peillice, and found it occupied, as I have told thee. Banba, my wife, is here in the Dun, employed in keeping Baseg's griddle hot (a task, to say the truth no two hands in the Coom could match her in), and Geidé and Fiacha, thine old daltins, are tending now on the grey-headed runner, the priest, they say, of this sea-scouring herd. I saw him at a distance as they bore him in a splendid carbudh toward the temple."

"Thou runnest on at a strange rate, Duach," exclaimed Eithne, "tell me what presses most. What hast thou learned of Baseg and his views?"

"Nothing that I have heard," replied the kern, "but much that I surmise from what I saw."

"Oh, what would I not give," cried Eithne, clasping her hands, and looking up with earnestness, "that Elim did but know what storms await us!"

"Thou touchest the cord aright now, Eithne," said the kern, "and that must be my part to execute. Before the morning dawns, my own rough voice shall tell him the secret in Rath-Aedain."

"Is it possible? What, Duach, wilt thou find him?"

cried Eithne, rapturously, and seeming to forget that there was any difficulty in the kern's proposal. "Do—do—good Duach, haste. Give him this bodkin, as a token from Eithne; tell him what force is mustered in the Coom, and where I am confined. Yet let him not approach too hastily; his own small sept would be lost in the encounter, as readily as a curach in the cataract. It were better, at whatever risk to us, that he should wait the arrival of O'Driscoll, who was to join him, as I think, some days hence, for they had heard already of the return of the Finn Geinte on the coasts."

"If he come not single-handed," said the kern, "thou mayest account thyself fortunate in his discretion. Wait for O'Driscoll! He will as soon await a subsidy from Teamair. But what of that? I must despatch my office."

"But how—oh, thoughtless as I am," cried Eithne, with a sudden recollection, "what way art thou to execute this message? Return the way thou camest thou never canst, and every other avenue is guarded."

"What has been once done may be done again," said Duach. "I pass to the valley through the very Dun. I have found means to make Banba acquainted with my purpose, and she will give me a signal, at thy door, when the favourable moment is arrived. Meantime, fair child, let us haste to thy apartment, for it is near the hour. Go thou before, that I may make the necessary change in my attire."

So saying, he opened the bundle which he bore, and displayed a flowing dress, which once had been the robe of the deceased Ard-Drai, and was bestowed on Duach at his death. Eithne entered her apartment, and in a short time beheld the gaunt figure of the kern appear upon her threshold, clad in the flowing robes of her beloved guardian. She refrained from making any remark upon the appearance, and both remained awaiting in silence the expected signal of Banba.

In the mean time, the worthy helpmate of Duach, having received her instructions, prepared to play her part effectually in the drama which her skin-clad lord had planned. The following day was to be devoted to a magnificent entertainment in the Dun, at which the Vikingr and the chiefs of the northern fleet were to be present, and the strong-armed Banba was employed to bake a quantity of griddle bread, and other staple articles of food, sufficient for the occasion. In this she was assisted by several daughters of the sept, over whom she presided with an authoritative air; now looking to those who turned the ponderous quern, now to the nimble hands that kneaded the flour into cakes as fast as it proceeded from the revolving stone, and now to those whose task it was to beat the grain from the husk on a round limestone, or search it with the sieve and dildorn for the grinders. The chief apartment of the Dun was given up to the purposes of preparation, and this circumstance facilitated the design, which otherwise would have been utterly hopeless.

The dusk of twilight had now almost deepened into darkness, and the hour of the evening meal, the moment anxiously expected by Banba, was announced by the buabhal, or great wooden trumpet, from a distant mountain. The work-women laid aside their task, and hastened to their respective homes, leaving Duach alone to make all secure behind them. A single gallóglach kept guard on the platform before the Dun, and at a distance, by the Ard-Drai's cairn, which rose at the side of the bridge, Tuathal and a numerous party seemed keeping careless watch. The Ard-Drai, sitting on the rustic battlement, was listening intently to the tales of the Nain, and other spirits of the haunted trilithons, with which the memory of the aged Eogan Bel abundantly supplied him.

To disarm the single sentinel was the first step necessary, but this it would be premature to attempt before Duach was prepared to take advantage of the manœuvre.

Going softly to the door of Eithne's chamber, Bauba **struck** softly on the wicket with her hand. It opened instantly, and to her consternation, instead of her husband, she beheld in the dim light, the tall sepulchral figure of the deceased Ard-Drai, as she believed it, issuing from the room.

"Bright stars!" cried Banba, flinging herself on her face, "I am lost for ever! I have raised the dead unknowingly to life! I have broken the sleep of the cairn."

"Speak softly, brainless woman," cried Duach, in an earnest whisper, "or thou wilt soon repair thy fault by bringing those who live to death, against their will."

"O shade of the reverend Ard-Drai!" cried the woman, "forgive my ignorant head, and rest untroubled."

"O shade, and sign, and substance of a simpleton," said Duach, stooping down and tapping her shoulder, "thou wilt destroy us with thy foolish fright. Not know thy husband yet?" he added, in surprise, then looking over his shoulder to see that Eithne could not observe him, he slipped the girdle from his waist, and laid it smartly two or three times across the shoulders of the prostrate Banba, saying at every stroke :

"Dear Banba, arise. Arise, beloved Banba. The night will pass before we leave the Dun. Dost thou not know thy husband, honey Banba?"

The action had the effect of producing instant recognition.

"What, darling of my eyesight, is it thou!" cried Banba, springing to her feet, and flinging her arms around his neck. "I thought it was a shade, the Ard-Drai's sprite, that menaced me."

"I shall be a shade, and a sprite, and a heap of earth to boot," said Duach, "if thou delay me thus with prating here. Is the sentinel armed?"

"He shall not be so long," said Banba, eagerly. "See here; I've brewed his draught for him already," she added, holding up a horn of liquor, "and drugged it too."

But how came thou in the Ard-Drai's robes ? Well, up and down is now the word in the Coom. There's that old Baseg rules it like a chieftain, and here art thou an Ard-Drai, all but the power and person. Who knows how soon Tuathal may lay his skene and cap at Duach's feet ?"

"Who knows how soon he may find Duach's head at his own," said the kern, "if thou wilt loiter thus ? Away ! away ! dear Banba, for the sentinel. Take him his draught—and—hark ! What guard is on the bridge ?"

"Tuathal, with a score of gallóglachs," replied his spouse.

"What, but a score ?" cried Duach, "and with Tuathal at their head ? 'Tis nothing. Haste, thou, and do thy part on the sentinel."

Banba, throwing a plaided mantle around her shoulders, and placing the horn of liquor under it, proceeded to accost the sentinel, whom she found little difficulty in persuading to refresh his spirits with the draught. Returning to the Dun, she awaited, with her husband, the effects of the potent dose which she had given, and soon after had the satisfaction of seeing it produce its full effect. The man walked to and fro for a time, humming a song, and seeming much exhilarated by the drink. At length, however, his pace became less steady, his voice faltered, and after many efforts to shake off the heaviness which seemed to press upon him, he thrust the pole of his battle-axe into the soft bawn, and stretching his frame at ease upon the grass, resigned himself to sleep.

So far successful, Duach possessed himself of the forsaken weapon, and after giving Banba her directions, stole round in the dusk to the side of the cairn opposite to that on which Tuathal's guard was placed. Reaching the stony mound, now bound with earth, and decked by many a plant, he could plainly hear the voices of the guard, Tuathal being at that moment busily engaged in

conversation on an awful story which Eogan Bel had just related.

"Thy narrative is fearful," said Tuathal, in a low voice, "and the twilight gives it threefold terror. It is strange, is it not, that I had rather front a Cath in arms than one of those thin shadows thou describest?"

"It seems not strange to me," replied the dresbdeartach. "The line between the living and the dead is one that nature means not should be violated, but when it is, the adept in the secrets of the grave has all the advantage over poor, ignorant, trembling flesh and blood."

"And yet is it not singular," said Tuathal, "with all that I have heard of sprite and shade, none ever yet disturbed me except in thought?"

Those words were yet upon the lips of the speaker, when a gallóglach was seen hurrying across the bridge, and directing his steps to the young chieftain. Flinging himself prostrate at the young warrior's feet, he said, in a low voice of smothering dread and shame:

"I come, Tuathal, to crave thy pardon, and if thou give it not, at least believe me not a conscious traitor."

"What meanest thou, Eimhir? Rise and tell thy tale," replied the Ard-Drai. "What brings thee hither from the Carcair, where I placed thee as a guard upon our renegade prisoner?"

"The prisoner has escaped," replied the gallóglach.

Before Tuathal had time to utter a word in answer to this startling information, a low cry of terror was heard in the direction of the Dun, and presently after they beheld Banba, flying, with uplifted arms, towards the bridge.

"The Ard-Drai! Ullulu! the Ard-Drai!" she exclaimed, in wild affright—"Oh, sons of Mogh Ruith, the Ard-Drai!"

"I am here, Banba! the Ard-Drai is here!" cried Tuathal.

"Not thou! not thou! the old Ard-Drai! Oh, the old Ard-Drai! Look! there he is! He rises from the cairn! He is coming towards us! Oh, there he comes. Tuathal! save me! save me!"

Saying this, she cast herself upon her face, while Tuathal, with a countenance aghast with terror, and an imagination excited by the tales to which he had been listening, looked askance in the direction of the cairn. Slowly descending the mound, habited in the flowing garments of his departed predecessor, and bearing in one hand the battle-axe which he had taken from the sleeping sentinel, he beheld, with eyes expanded, and lips dragged back in fear, the shade, as he believed, of the Ard-Drai, approaching with a slow and solemn movement. Tuathal was the first to fly, and not one of the party forbore to imitate his example. He secreted himself by lying lengthwise in the shadow of the shrubs by which the rough-hewn railing of the bridge was decorated; and cast from his prostrate posture a sidelong glance of terror at the figure which stalked by him, without daring to move a muscle, or utter the lightest sound. The remainder of the party, in the mean time, who had been equally wrought upon by the fancy of the dresbdeartach, and were no less proof against imaginary terrors than their master, lay huddled together on the opposite side, more scared by what they deemed a painted shade, than they might have been by a Cath of Ithians. When, however, he had reached the opposite bank of the river, Duach could not contain his exultation, but hastily flinging off the dress which had served his purpose so completely, gave utterance to a shout of "Conn Crethir a-bo!" that made the banks re-echo, and brought all the party to their feet at once.

"Follow me! We are foiled! It is the prisoner!" cried Tuathal, flourishing his brazen gen, and hurrying across the bridge. "Oh, Sedna Innuaraigh thou the first that ever wrote of martial forms, behold how we are

flouted by a kern! Let loose a flight of arrows after him. Eimhir, thy cranntabhaill! Thou art dexterous at the sling. See where he flies into the copse! Now, Eimhir—now, to regain thy prisoner and preserve thy own freedom.”

The small sharp arrows whistled in the air, some darts were flung, and the ponderous brazen ball was hurled, with a hissing sound, from the sling of Eimhir; but Duach had already reached the copse, and a renewed shout of exultation, as he plunged into the wood, announced at once his safety and his defiance.

“He is gone!” said Tuathal. “It were vain to follow him into that thicket, for the martin is not more familiar with every turn of the mountain fastnesses. In idle times, it was his wont, like a wild cat, to lie in wait for prey amongst the underwood, and many a lonely traveller has found his spring a sure one. But come, thou faint limbed ghost-seer, come, good Banba. Thou’lt learn in the Carcair how to watch for spectres.”

“Thou ill-tongued chief,” said Banba, struggling with the gallóglach, “I will not stir a foot until the thanist’s orders are completed. There’s bread still wanting towards the festival.”

“If it be, we will find honester hands to bake it,” said Tuathal. “Take her away, and Eimhir, too, along with her. Keep a close guard on both.”

He added to the number the sleeping sentinel, whom he found still lying on the bawn before the Dun. After which he hastened toward the magnificent dwelling which had been raised for Basey, near the temple; and, at no great distance from which, since the arrival of the Vikingr, Kenric had also taken up his residence. The vociferations of Banba, who struggled wildly with her captors, pursued him to the entrance of the building.

CHAPTER LXXI.

WE turned aside from the Northumbrian as he followed Inguar through the armed tribes by which the Coom was peopled, on his way from the place where the Vikingr landed. He supposed that Inguar would have at once conveyed him to the dwelling of Tuathal, but, on pretence of preparing Baseg for his reception, he introduced him, instead, to a small peillice on the outskirts of the valley. His attendants at this place were two tall Danes, whose flaxen hair and finical attire, while they proclaimed them perfect adepts in the early foible of their country, contrasted strangely with their lofty persons and coldness of demeanour. The night passed away without Inguar's return, and on the following morning the impatience of Kenric became so great, that he was about to go in search of the Scandinavian, or at least to wander a little from the cottage, to see what might be passing in the valley.

To his great surprise and indignation, one of the men, a person of an affected air, and with something gaudy in the fashion of his attire, obstructed his attempt to leave the house, by placing a naked sword between him and the doorway. Kenric remonstrated by an angry gesture, which the stranger received with a cool and flippant demeanour, and without evincing any inclination to change his design.

Provoked to find himself a prisoner, but unable, from the difference of language, to obtain any information from his sentinels, Kenric was compelled, unsatisfied, to retire again into the interior of the peillice. The idea that this restraint could be designed by Inguar was one which Kenric would not admit; and yet, as the absence of the latter became protracted, he began to question with a still more anxious feeling, the prudence of his conduct in

committing himself so wholly to the power of the Swede and his patron.

In the course of the day, however, his distrust was removed by the approach of Inguar. The latter expressed the utmost astonishment at what he mentioned of the conduct of the men, which, he said, was wholly a mistake of theirs. He addressed them at the same time in their own tongue; but it seemed to Kenric as if they hardly took his words in a reproving sense, for they smiled, and the person who had first obstructed him replied, in a bantering tone, of which Kenric only understood as much as was conveyed by air and accent :

"Destroyer thwarted him, good Inguar. He was for walking, but Dazzler crossed his steps. I am glad of thy return—most glad, for my feet were weary of their durance. My feet!—Alas, poor Rugen and Defiance! they died the ignoble death of age, long ere I thought I should again behold their giver."

He departed, while Inguar turned to Kenric, who still appeared dissatisfied.

"Well, Inguar," said the Anglo-Saxon, "thou wilt conduct me now, without delay, to Eithne."

"I will," said Inguar, "but not without delay. Thou must see Baseg first. He has become the pride of the Vikingr, the Runner of the great Incendiary, and even now officiates in his temple. I would not, however, have thee meet him yet, for reasons thou shalt know hereafter. In the mean time, dwell here in privacy throughout the day, and in the even be merry with some friends of mine, to whom I shall conduct thee when the night falls."

"And Eithne?" said the Anglo-Saxon.

"Thou must learn patience, learned as thou art," said Inguar, "or thou wilt weary mine. Eithne thou canst not see until it is the pleasure of the thanist, and that is to be won by slow approaches."

Saying this, he departed, and Kenric re-entered the

shed, where the remaining sentinel was satisfying his hunger with food which the Northumbrian felt no inclination to partake.

He came again at the appointed time, and Kenric followed him in silence through the valley. Before they entered the dwelling, which was no other than the peillice of Duach, altered and prepared inside for Ingvar's use, the latter, turning to the young Northumbrian, advised him to be content for this evening to share in the enjoyments of the feast, without seeking to enter into conversation with any of the guests. Kenric, finding that he made this a point of essential consequence, consented to the arrangement, though not without some discontent.

The feast was a gayer one than he had ever witnessed. The scalds and cruitirés vied in their minstrelsy, and the northern warriors exhibited their wondrous sleights of dexterity, such as twirling a dagger in the air, keeping up some brazen balls together, and other feats, such as were the grace of a Scandinavian hero, but which in these degenerate days have become the accomplishments of poor street-jugglers only. Mirth, music, dancing, singing, in a spirit of freer revelry than any to which Kenric had ever been accustomed, composed the chief amusements of the evening. Its effect upon the mind of Kenric was proportioned to his long and rigorous seclusion amongst the quiet inhabitants of Deochain Neassan. Tuathal saw and welcomed him, but did not enter into any prolonged discourse, and it surprised him that Basseg, whom he wished to conciliate for Eithne's sake, did not once make his appearance. Notwithstanding this disappointment, however, and a certain strange air which was over all the proceedings, he did not forbear to enter into the spirit of the scene, and it was with regret that he saw Ingvar approach to whisper him that it was time to go, consoling him, at the same time, by the informa-

tion, that this festivity was to continue for some days, and that he might return the following evening if he pleased. But it was necessary to their eventual success that Kenric, for the present, should be entirely under the guidance of the Swede.

The amusements on the following evening were not less spirited nor less delightful; nor on the third, nor fourth occasion did Kenric feel more weary than at first. On the contrary, Inguar had more difficulty in persuading him to leave the scene of mirth, at the time he wished, at the last, than he had in the beginning.

One morning at daybreak, as he lay awake, he heard a man's voice, at a little distance from the secluded hut. Curiosity and restlessness induced him to arise and leave the house, which was no longer guarded by the strangers.

"Ale ! morat ! mead !" he heard the person say, as he waved his arms in the dim twilight, and enforced his words with violent gesticulation; "let Eimhir never see, let Eimhir never hear the sound of the detested words again ! Let Baseg be the king of Coom nan Druadh ! Let Tuathal be as angry as he will, I kiss the beard of Baseg and of Inguar ! They are indeed the favoured sons of Bel, for they give us the very fire of his rays to drink. As for all weaker draughts, let the adorers of Samhuin make much of them ! To the cold moon let them be dedicated ! I am for Bel, and for the drink of Baseg !"

Kenric, without staying to exchange any conversation with him, returned to the cottage, marvelling much if Baseg and his colleague had already gained such influence in the Coom. These thoughts, however, did not prevent his accompanying the latter to the peillice of Inguar on the following evening, and sharing in the festivities even more freely than before.

Still Eithne did not appear, nor did Kenric hear her

name once mentioned in the Coom, throughout the week. To his frequent inquiries, Inguar replied that Tuathal did not wish she should at present leave the Dun, nor was it yet her own desire to come amongst her kinsfolk. Kenric, although he strongly suspected that some secret tyranny might be exercised against her, did not, however, permit such thoughts to escape him, but continued the same course of still increasing dissipation, stifling the occasional remorse that reproached him with his infidelity to Elim, by whatever means he could.

On the morning of the sixth day, he had taken his seat at the three-legged table which stood in the centre of the building, and remained for a long time with his head resting on his hands, and his person motionless. In this condition he was found by Inguar, who called him more than once, by his name, before he seemed to hear.

"Well, Inguar!" he exclaimed, starting up, and with a look of greater ardour than he had yet assumed, "how is it with the thanist now?"

"He is willing to converse with thee this evening," answered Inguar, "if thou art ready for the conference."

"I follow instantly," said the Northumbrian.

"Not quite so fast," replied the Swede. "At sunset, or immediately before, thou wilt be expected at the temple; and, in the mean time, I return to prepare the thanist for thy coming. For he, Kenric, holds thee not a common guest to deal with."

The Northumbrian, disappointed that there should be any delay, promised to follow Inguar at the appointed hour.

CHAPTER LXXII.

THE latter, hurrying along the valley, betook him to the temple in the grove, which had been lately re-erected by Tuathal, and consigned to the custody of Baseg. On this evening the hoary thanist was employed within the building, preparing for the celebration of a festival, which was intended to partake, at the same time, of the gloomy nature of the Scandinavian rites, and of the milder superstition of the fire-adorers* of Inisfail. The manner in which the interior of the building had been altered in its new construction had something of this mingled character. The altar, with its planetary signs, remained the same, but in a circular recess behind, three niches hollowed from the wall, contained, in timber roughly hewn, but of gigantic size, the three great idols of the north, with the customary symbols of terror, wrath, and blood; the sword, the club, and Frigga's cruel bow.

Standing at the feet of Thor, and holding in his hand the gory brush which was used in sprinkling the blood of the victims on the surrounding worshippers, appeared the grey-haired Baseg, employed in directing the movements of some men, who were preparing the interior for the approaching rite. The sunshine, striking through the open door, the only orifice admitting light, and falling on the ground around the feet of the gigantic idols, gave a lurid splendour to the edifice.

"Hast thou brought him?" asked Baseg, with a smile, as he beheld his colleague hastening towards him, with a look of eagerness and of perplexity.

Inguar answered in the negative.

"I told thee," said Baseg, "thou wouldst find him not

* See Note 15.

the babe thou seemedst to think. Here, Geid  ,” he added, addressing one of the Duach’s children, who stood near, “let this brazen vase be placed beside the iron altar; and thou, Fiacha, place the ox-yoke near it, on the earth. I have myself too long attempted,” continued the old man, with the same hard smile, “to do what thou art striving now to bring to pass, with this Northumbrian.”

“Thou camest too suddenly upon him,” said Inguar.

“Ay, even as thou pursuest him now too lingeringly,” replied Baseg. “He’ll strike a course between, if thou still loiterest, and leave us both like fools, on either side, with the empty noose to mock us in our hands. Thou toldest me on thy coming from Luimneach, where thou hadst found thy pupil once again, that one short moon should see him grasping the armilla here, before the blood-stained altar of the Incendiary. The festival is close at hand, and thou art here without thy learned ally.”

Inguar looked downward, with a chidden aspect. After considering for a long time, while Baseg, with the same flinty coldness of aspect and manner, proceeded with his occupations, he said :

“Mane is not as yet in his third quarter, and there is time to make that promise good. It is something (is it not ?) that he is in the Coom again. Here comes Tuathal, looking troubled also. If thou hast yet not wholly lost thy eloquence, exert it, grey-haired servant of the Whirlwind, and we shall prosper yet with the Northumbrian.”

Saying this, he hurried out of sight, leaving Baseg to deal alone with the Druid chieftain. The latter came to complain of the unruly demeanour of the Scandinavian troops, who had already begun to swagger in the Coom, as if they were its conquerors, not allies. Baseg made some excuses for the Vikingr, on the score of their well-known character, but these did not satisfy Tuathal, who seldom ceased to murmur until the thanist had recourse

to anger. On this occasion he displayed even more dissatisfaction than at former times, and at length began to menace Baseg with a change of measures :

"Hold ! dare not thus to speak in the temple of the Whirlwind," answered Baseg, at length assuming an incensed tone. "Anger is good, but not against the Incendiary ! Rage is a folly, vented against the Supercilious. I'll tell thee how this evil has arrived. The soft and lazy worship of thy sires, their cold and bloodless offerings, their sluggish rites—these were the crimes that angered haughty Odin, and brought the ire of Thor upon the valley."

"Thou art bold thyself," replied Tuathal, "to take my sires to task for their belief. Our fathers held this valley long in peace. War never seared its herbage till the Coom first opened its bosom to thyself in exile. It flourished in the keeping of Curaoi, it sickened and declined in mine. Thou toldest me it should soon again revive, that Odin wanted blood, and that was all. He has had blood, it reeks about his feet, yet are we now farther from peace than ever. Those sons of violence, whom Inguar hath brought to be our friends, are dogs of prey, that worry and destroy us. Thy scheme against the Ithian rests idle still. Thou hast withdrawn my people from their fear ; thou hast corrupted them with dissolute vice, with revels that have more of woe than mirth, and drink that turns their blood to maddening fire. Thy plot against our foes is gone abroad, and even now they are beginning to awake, for their own safety and for our destruction. Thou saidst the Sire of Battles, in return for countless offerings, would make the sons of Mogh Ruith warlike. The sons of Mogh Ruith never yet were otherwise than valiant until now. Our valley is in danger. Is it now to drunkards and to revel rioters that I must turn for its security ?"

While he said this, a loud shout, as of a person in a

high state of excitement, was heard without the temple, and soon after Eimhir, the slinger, appeared at the porch, with a drinking vessel in one hand, while the other was extended, as in a gesture of oratorical energy :

"Ho, Baseg, ho !" exclaimed the kern. "What, Odin ! Thor ! Who says that Eimhir fears ? Who says that Eimhir dares not face the universe ?"

"Is that the unwarlike spirit ?" said Baseg, with his usual hard and unmoved smile.

"Of old," replied Tuathal, "he talked less boastfully, but could do better. The silent valor wrought the steadiest. Of what avail that rash and frantic spirit, with such a frame to second it ? Come hither, Eimhir."

"Not for thy fear, but thy love," said Eimhir, staggering into the temple ; "to please myself, not thee. Because thou art the heir of the Ard-Drai, and not because thou art my chief I love thee, Tuathal, but I defy thee !"

"Eimhir," said Baseg, "be more reverent."

"I am reverent enough," said Eimhir, drinking, "as reverent as thyself, cold grey-beard, or any Thor, or any Odin of ye all ! Ha ! Eimhir knows what arrow pierced young Conall ! Thinkest thou I fear thee ? Thinkest thou that Eimhir fears that wooden thing, with his great club and sword ? or that tall slattern with her bow ? That for them !" said he, using a gesture of contempt. "They shall not bully Eimhir."

So saying he drank again.

"Thou sayest thou lovest me, Eimhir," said Tuathal. "Is this the way thou showest it ?"

"Son of the Ard-Drai," answered the kern, "thou knowest I love thee. Dost thou not know it ?" he added, staggering towards Tuathal, and confronting him ; "dost thou not know I love thee ? Darest thou tell that I love thee not ?"

"If thou dost," replied Tuathal, putting him back

with the point of his sheathed sword, "it is not by drunkenness, or by disobedience, I would have thee show it."

"Hear me, Tuathal," said Eimhir, grasping the sword point with one hand, and looking affectionately into his chieftain's face. "There is no man more knowing in the affair of right and wrong than Moyel of Rath-Aedain. This Baseg is a fool to Moyel. And yet I have heard Moyel say himself, when we have sat together over Macha's ale, that there was evil in unreasonable abstinence."

"Thou wretch !" said Tuathal, "did that give warrant for thy vile excesses."

"Not for excess," said Eimhir, staggering back, as his chieftain angrily pushed him away with his sword ; "not for excess," said he, taking the drinking cup between both hands, and endeavouring to stand steady while he drained it to the bottom ; "extremes in every case are surely evil : so Moyel said, and Moyel spoke the truth. I only strive to keep a kind of medium."

Saying this, he left the temple, not indeed observing, in his way to the door, the strict unerring medium of which he made his boast.

"There's discipline! there's order!" said the Ard-Drai. "But hear me, Baseg. I will no longer wait in this inaction. This very night the beacon shall be lit upon the crags, and every hood in the Coom shall march for Inbherseine."

"Be patient, brave Tuathal," said the thanist. "These northmen have their fancies, which must be humoured, if we would have them firm as well as fierce. They will not advance a weapon in the enterprise until their feasts, and rites, and auguries are quite perfected. Bear with me, then, who know our allies well; and leave me now, for yonder comes a youth who will be a most needful auxiliary."

The young Ard-Drai departed, and Inguar entered, fol-

lowed by the Northumbrian, whose eye wandered, with a mixture of curiosity and awe, over all the lurid splendours of the building.

The thanist received him with an air of real kindness, and bidding Inguar leave them for a time, addressed the Anglo-Saxon thus:

"Inguar has informed me that thou hast a complaint to make, and reparation to desire."

"I have," said Kenric, "and I pray thee hear me favourably."

"Respecting what, or whom?" said Baseg.

Kenric paused for a few moments, and then replied:

"A party of Tuathal's gallóglachs have laid rough hands upon a friend of mine, who is now detained a prisoner in the Coom. I desire her freedom, and that I may conduct her to her friends."

"Thou meanest Eithne," answered Baseg, "the niece of the deceased Ard-Drai."

"The same," said Kenric.

"She is in the Coom, indeed," returned the thanist, "but by no means a prisoner; and as to violence, who told thee she was seized by force?"

"One who should know," said Kenric, "Inguar, the Swede."

"He erred, or he deceived thee," said the thanist, "there was indeed the semblance of assault, but nothing more, for it was her own wish to leave Rath-Aedain."

"Her wish!" cried Kenric, in astonishment. "Her wish to leave Rath-Aedain!"

"And where's the wonder?" said the thanist. "Why should it raise surprise that she should join the fortunes of her sept, in preference to those of one she never loved, except as a dependent loves its guardian?"

He proceeded to use his former instances with Kenric. The allurements were strong, but the discovery of the real name and character of the alleged usurper was sufficient

to render them unavailing. Yet Kenric did not question Baseg's right to look upon himself as one aggrieved; for, though he had heard from Elim an indistinct account, and faintly understood, of the grounds on which he held his title, he gave credit to Baseg's denial of the offence by which it had been forfeited, and which indeed had never been publicly proved in evidence against him. He believed that what Baseg called a calumny was an unfounded suspicion on the part of his sept; but he could not bring himself in any degree to inculcate Elim.

"The devastating swarm!" said Kenric, with impatience, as he gazed on the Vikingr's troops who mustered without; "they and their ill-omened ensign, ere long, will muster on our seas as thick as those shoals the northern winter drives into the nets of our fishermen."

"They say," said Baseg, "that their object is not wrong, but justice."

"What!" exclaimed Kenric, sharply, with a smile, "is that become the pirate's pretext also?"

"Even were it not," replied the thanist, "and were they not, as they allege, the descendants of a people sorely and wrongfully aggrieved by southern Europe, I cannot yet perceive, if there be such a right as right of conquest, why a Vikingr of Nordland may not as freely claim it as a Righ-fine of Rome or Macedon."

"There is a difference," said Kenric, "between a right to make conquests, and the right to keep conquests made by our ancestors centuries before."

"Waiving that question, however, for the present," said Baseg, "let us turn our thoughts to other matters. To-night there is a concert of the scalds in my poor dwelling. Thou wilt be welcome, as thou ever wert, to share our mirth, and, if thou wilt, our power. And now despatch, for I have weighty business."

Saying this, he dismissed the Anglo-Saxon, well knowing that the single information he had given would work

its way deep into Kenric's mind. The latter spent the day in watching the Scandinavian and the native troops, at their various exercises on the plain; the hobblers coursing gracefully in their mock fight with headless spears, and the northmen practising with battle-axe and falchion. Here might be seen a body of Saxon auxiliaries, distinguished by the ponderous hammers which hung from their saddle bows, and there a close body of the Danish infantry, clad in the scaled helmet and chain hauberk, wielded the two-edged sword, which was in after times the terror of many a close contested field. In the midst of all this variety, however, the sprite of his own passion haunted Kenric, and as the evening fell, he sought, on the river side, the repose of mind which it was hard to suppose he could obtain in this suspense. The calm of nature, however, in this troubled state, had something of a quieting effect, and he sat down by the foot of an old oak, whose roots were washed bare by the flood, to hear the peaceful bubbling of the stream, to feel the fresh, sweet wind upon his cheek, and to enjoy the cool and quiet light of evening.

Not since he spoke with Moyel, in the caves where first he learned the tale of his own disappointment, did Kenric feel the loneliness that sunk upon his spirit at this moment. What, should he now succeed in his suit to Baseg, then Elim, after all, was to be happy, and he was to be wretched; and what had Elim suffered that this flood of brightness and of peace should pour itself upon him, all unforced, almost unsought? A troubled, fearful movement crept through all his limbs, and made him rise with quickness and alarm.

"What spirit rules me now?" he said, trembling with a fear that still was virtuous. "The same, the very same! Returned again, but with a sevenfold power!" He pressed his hands upon his temples, and stamped, as if the action could shake off the influence he dreaded.

"It is all my fault, my own fault," he continued; "I had my warning; I had my bitter past experience to guide and to restrain me. Well, let it be enough that I have yielded, that I have been once more found wanting to filial duty, and to friendship, both. But let me shut this dark and deadly spirit from out my heart with hate, with detestation. No, no; this is too hideous, too abhorrent. 'Tis I that have enjoyed, not Elim; Elim has suffered and has earned his happiness. Thou canst not blind me, fiend! Though thou shouldst ruin me, thou canst not blind me. The path that duty traced for him at first, he has kept unquestioning, and he deserves his happiness. Despair and envy, hate and jealousy! Black monsters! Ugly inmates! Do I hear your brawling voices in my tranquil house once more? My house, I thought, was purified and quiet! Domnona! oh, Domnona! Oh, spirit of my mild and tender mother! If thou art happy, aid thy wretched son."

Distracted by these thoughts, and utterly unsettled in his mind, he saw the night approach with fearful feelings. He almost longed for the return of Inguar, although the revels in the valley were not now the kind of consolation he desired. He sought the solitary cottage, and lit up his fire with strange and altering spirits. There was no comfort all around him now. He lighted at the embers one of the small tapers which were left for his use in the shed, and sat beside it on his shapeless tripod, to gaze upon the fire, and see the forms of convents, raths, and castles in the embers. He thought awhile (if such a continuous whirl of disconnected images within the brain could be entitled thinking,) of Eithne, of Elim, Ailred, Inguar, and matters still more fearful. Wearied, at length, by the intensity of reflection, he dropped into a long and dreamless slumber.

Before he awoke, the weather had changed, and a showery gust drove full on the little dwelling, and some-

times stirred the skins of which the roof was formed. Scarce had he waked when the wicket latch was raised, and, seeming to be borne upon a gust of rain and wind, the Scandinavian rushed into the dwelling.

"Kenric," said he, "come quick. The thanist's house is full, and he is impatient for thy presence. A wretched accident has occurred, which must precipitate the stroke of war, and this may be the last night we shall ever spend in mirth."

He alluded to the escape of Duach, who, on this night, had fled to Inbhersceine. The Northumbrian hastily threw around him one of the hooded cloaks of freize which formed the characteristic costume of the sept of Mogh Ruith, and followed Inguar through the rain, which seemed like the commencement of a rising storm. On the way, the Swede informed him that the utmost confusion had been occasioned by the escape of a prisoner, thoroughly known to Elim, who had been rashly entrusted by Tuathal to the custody of Eimhir, when scarce recovered from the effects of the morning's intemperance.

They found the house of the thanist (a building splendid in relation to the period) crowded with revellers and brightly lighted up. The walls of the building were of polished yew, the apartments not numerous, but extensive, and the floor composed of the beautiful blue and white marble of Corca Luighe, than which not Italy itself afforded finer. The thanist received him with augmented favour, and an eagerness of welcome that had something in it of anxiety. In the course of the evening, at a time when the volatile Northumbrian was excited by the music and poetry of the scalds, the wily Baseg renewed his instances, with greater force and eloquence than ever, to win him from his fidelity.

"If thou art bound to Elim, as thou sayest," said he, "remember still, that in Cair Lud, before thou knewest of his usurpation, thou gavest me hope of thine assist-

ance first. Thou dost not deny the justice of my claim, for thou hast thyself admitted, long ago, that Elim's right, at least, is questionable. Consider, therefore, well, if I possess no claim upon thy service."

A song of the chief scald, in praise of Brage, the Scandinavian Apollo, interrupted their discourse, and gave Kenric exquisite delight. When it was ended, an attendant served to the thanist a copious horn of oel, which the chieftain tasted, and passed to Kenric.

"I'll drink no more," said the latter, rejecting the cup, "my brain is dull already."

"Nay," answered Baseg, "this cup thou canst not pass. It is the votive draught, and thou must drain it dry to mighty Odin."

"To Odin!" exclaimed Kenric.

"To Odin, Frigga, Thor, or any other sounding shade thou wilt," replied Baseg, "but do not send the cup away untasted, or there will be some angry eyes around thee.

"Nay, sooner than offend," said Kenric, taking the vessel, "although, in truth, I fear my weak head. Not weak," he added, after having drunk, "in itself, for without vanity, there are not many clearer in the day time, but thus assailed," he took another draught, "'tis mortal after all."

"Now, ply him close," said Baseg, whispering Inguar, as the latter glided in behind their seats. "The breach is opened, now he has began to rail at vanity once more. Ply him still closer, while I go to Eithne. If thou canst get him (as, what may not the songs and oel do?) to take the oath to-night, in any mood, 'twill not be difficult to urge him to act up to it. We must, at any price, place an effectual bar in the way of this connection between Tuathal and the usurping Ithian. 'Tis more in hate than policy I speak it; for, though we fail, that still can blas' his happiness."

He departed, and Inguar took his place by Kenric's side.

"Kenric," said he, "thou wert for many moons a guest at Inbhersceine?"

"Thou knowest I was," said Kenric.

"And didst thou in that time see reason to suppose that this young slip of the Coom, this Eithne, loved another than its chief?"

Kenric returned a slow and astonished negative.

"Remember well," insisted Inguar, "didst thou see nothing to raise a doubt on that point?"

"Their love," said Kenric, as if sobered by the remembrance, and after a long pause, "was like that of two calm and happy spirits, secure of each other's truth, and boundless in their confidence."

"Say rather," said Inguar, "of two spirits, yoked together by the cold and perishable tie of interest. But take thine oel, and be merry. How like you the invention of our scalds?"

"Somewhat gloomy and hyperbolical, methinks," said Kenric, "and over nice in the adjustment of the measure. If they gave their words a little of the freedom they allow their thoughts, the movement of both would be more easy. That broquet we have heard, with its monstrous images, and strict syllabic harmony, was like a giant walking in a pair of pinching brogs."

"Thou art dull," said Inguar, "if Eithne's mind was not clearly visible to thee at Inbhersceine. I passed but six short days beneath that roof, and yet, from what I saw within that time, if I were asked to point the bridegroom out, my finger should not mark the Ithian chief."

"Whom then?" said Kenric, smiling.

"In honest truth, thyself," replied the Swede.

"Absurd!" cried Kenric, "let us hear the scald: This talk was silly jesting, but it is madmen's earnest."

The subject of the song was one of the more attractive

and imaginative of the legends of the north. The minstrel took occasion to relate the story of the giant Nor, and his gloomy daughter, Night, who, wedding with Daglingar, of the family of Heaven, gave birth to Day, a child as shining and as beautiful as she was black; how Odin gave to each a car in heaven, and commanded the child to follow the parent in regular succession. "Even now," continued the bard, "we have seen Day, borne on his horse Skinfaxa, of the Shining Mane, plunge down beyond the confines of the world, pursuing the course of his gloomy mother, who, toiling up the east, assumes her brooding empire over Earth. The dew which falls so cold upon the hills, and glitters hoary and congealed upon the lofty northern pines, is the foam which is shaken from the bit of her steed Renifane, of the Frosty Mane. Saw ye the bright broad moon that sped so gloriously at dusk amid the broken vapours. That lovely planet, and the gorgeous sun that turns every thing to light, wherever she appears, were once, as we are, human dwellers on the earth. Unhappy Mundilfara! Proud of his beautiful children, he expressed his admiration in the names he gave to both. Unhappy Mundilfara! not to remember that even the gods are prone to jealousy. Offended at the sublimity of their names, they took his children from the dwelling of the partial father. To the beauteous Sunna they committed the guidance of the car of Day, and her brother Mane even now careers amid the clouds above our head. Know ye those two fair stars that follow in the course of the great orb, as lesser jewels shining near that which is the pride of the diadem. They too once dwelt on earth, in the forms of the children Bill and Hinke. Returning from a fountain, with a water-vessel hung between, the rapacious Mane eyed their beauty from the heavens, and bore them away by violence, to add their gentle radiance to his track."

Ingvar, having once set foot upon the course, would not

Jesist from pressing what he announced; more especially as he perceived that, although Kenric treated it with ridicule, it was a dream too pleasing not to be acceptable. The excitement of the scene, the music, and the drink, which had already strongly affected him, restored the habitual character of levity which deeper feelings had so long repressed. He loudly combatted the theories launched forth by the more learned minstrels, respecting the origin and movement of the heavenly bodies; of Sunna, Mane, and of Bill and Hinke; which last, in the midst of the anger and derision of the assembly, he declared to be masses ponderous and opaque, like this of earth. From this time forward, the scene seemed to grow misty and dreamlike to his view. He had a consciousness of Inguar pressing him with brilliant promises and with assurances of Eithne's love, which, even in his stupor, he could not help deriding. He was half conscious, too, of other incidents of a more fearful nature; that Inguar urged him to forswear his faith to Elim, and become a member of a northern guild, at which a crowd of scalds and warriors pressed around, and offered to conduct him to the temple, bearing torches in their hands, which cast a light upon the fierce and half-intoxicated countenances of the guests:

"Thou fabulous fellow!" he said, addressing one of the scalds, who pressed him more than others. "A kern might teach thee to correct thy notions. Aske and Embla! Sunna and Daglingar! Off with this gibberish! But that I might be charged with self-conceit, I'd tell thee where thou might'st learn something better! Where would you lead me, Inguar?"

"Make way for the Hofgodar!" cried the latter. "The young Hofgodar of the Incendiary."

The crowd gave way, and Kenric was hurried forth, amid a group of noisy revellers, some of them waving torches in the air, some chanting snatches of a popular

droquet, and all unheeding the tempest which now raved with terrific violence above their heads. The gate of the temple was thrown open, and Kenric, as if moving in an awful dream, allowed himself to be led, without resistance or remonstrance, to the foot of the iron altar on which the perpetual fire was lighted up. The three gigantic idols seemed to scowl upon him, as, in stupified compliance with the instances of Inguar, he grasped the brazen ring which hung from the altar, and which felt moist and clammy in his hold, as if it had been lately washed (as in reality the custom was) with clotted gore, from the fount of sacrifice. Amid the momentary silence of the assembly he took the oath of fidelity to the guild, and felt, at the same instant, a shower descend upon his person, which had the hue of blood. Looking up, he beheld the Adelrunner, one of the priests, and one of those who were at the feast of Baseg, in the act of dipping in the marble vase that formed the sacrificial font, a brush with which he sprinkled all who were present. Before they left the temple, the votive horn was once more handed round, and as he quaffed the liquor in his turn, the temple, lights and all, disappeared from the eyes of the miserable Northumbrian, whose rashness courted the danger which he had not virtue to resist.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

IN the mean time, Baseg hastened to the Dun alone. On this evening, as has already been related, the active Duach had effected his escape from the valley, and Eithne anxiously awaited the result of his departure. She knew enough of the character of the northern warriors to fear the worst from their power in the Coom, and her anxiety

increased, as her suspense was heightened, by the departure of the kern. She heard from her chamber door the tumult which succeeded his escape, and the vociferations of Banba filled her with alarm. Nor could she gather, from her Saxon attendants, the slightest clue to the result of their undertakings.

‘ If I had but one friend amongst them all,” she said, as she paced anxiously through her apartment : “ but there is not a being in the Coom who can assist me, or whom I dare entrust. These horrid Finn Geinte : they say nor sex, nor age, nor place, nor virtue, ever yet were able to move a warrior of the north. Tuathal could not surely see me injured, but he is weaker than a child in mind. These horrid tyrants of the deep ! They say they offer human sacrifices to their terrific idols, and that at times the blood of their own chiefs has flowed to make their fearful gods propitious. It was my fault—my rashness wrought it all. Hark ! was not that a footstep in the Dun ! How still—how very still the night has fallen ! Baseg has power, it seems, amongst these northerns. He is not alone the rival, but the foe of Elim ; and yet if I could only see him here, I think that I could move even him to pity. But no, I will not sue a foe of Inisfail. I will be firm, though it is fearful to look forward. Perhaps I never may see Elim more ! Perhaps I never more may see Rath-Aedain—nor Macha, nor the pleasant kerne and keyriaghts that fed their flocks along the valley side. Poor Kenric ! Little did I dream, when I wept for losing one friend, that all might shortly follow.”

While she dwelt upon these thoughts—now following them in her own mind, now uttering them aloud, with bursts of grief, the twilight darkened, and the weather changed to the indications of a rising storm.

“ Blow wind and rain, and roll ye gathering clouds,” said Eithne, “ if ye can serve to cover his escape. How little would I heed the driving of the bitterest storm that

ever howled amongst the hills, if I could be the partner of his flight !”

The tempest rose, and towards midnight had acquired a fearful violence. The loneliness of her situation, and the dreary tumult of the elements, increased the pain of Eithne's contemplations, and made her long for morning. It was in the midst of such agitating thoughts that she heard the door of her apartment open, and beheld, wrapped in a hooded cloak, which had been drenched with the recent showers, the form of Baseg, the grey-headed thanist.

A movement of deep fear assailed the heart of Eithne at the sight of her malignant persecutor, at so unusual an hour; and she waited in motionless silence, until he should open an interview which she had so much reason to regard with apprehension.

The thanist made the wicket fast behind him, and then, letting down the hood upon his shoulders, advanced towards Eithne. As he approached her, the thought which was uppermost in her mind expressed itself in a tremulous murmur on her lips:

“Thou knowest,” she said, “that I am in thy power.”

“I would thou wert,” said Baseg, “it would be well for thee and for thy friends. Thou art in my charge, indeed, but that will not be long, for in two days more, thou wilt pass into other and less temperate hands. One question I have come to ask thee now. Hast thou been privy to the escape of Duach?”

“He has escaped then?” cried Eithne, clasping her hands, and gazing earnestly upon the thanist.

“I see it gives thee joy,” said Baseg.

“It does, indeed, heartfelt and grateful joy,” replied the maiden. “Poor faithful fellow, he, at least, is safe.”

“Ay, and may warn thy Elim, as thou hopest,” said Baseg; “and so he will, I have no doubt of that. But hear me, daring abettor of that traitor. His speed will

be in vain; his treason fruitless. Blood may be shed! these rocks may reek with gore; but long ere that can happen thy fate at least will be decided here; and whomsoever chance may destine to the sovereignty of Rath-Aedain, thou never shalt behold again the face of its possessor."

"Thou canst not say it," cried Eithne, sinking at heart, in spite of her resolve. "What have I done to thee, or to thy friends, that I should merit such a fearful fate."

"He will reach Rath-Aedain," continued Baseg, with a vindictive smile, "and Elim will hear the truth before the morning. Yet, at his utmost speed, two days must pass before his force can muster on these hills, and those two days, whatever be the issue of the contest, will see thy ruin sealed, and this scheme of happiness destroyed. Thou rash, unthinking maid! Thou hast ensured the outbreak of a war that, until now, was doubtful. I still had hopes that blood might have been spared by treaty, but now the fate of either party is decided, for war alone can settle the dispute."

He paused to let this information do its work, which it did, by chilling Eithne to the very soul.

"Heaven sees my heart," she said, in a low voice, and twining her fingers in agony, "that I had rather die a hundred deaths than be the cause of strife between the septs. If my poor life be all that is required to bring back peace to the Coom, and security to Rath-Aedain, I would not see them for a day at strife."

"Rise, Eithne," said the thanist, "and hear me speak."

"I will not rise," said Eithne, lifting her clasped hands, with a look of supplication, "till thou hast heard me first. Old man, refuse not to listen to me, at least. The old Ard-Drai was thy constant friend, and his forlorn successor did not close against thee in thy necessity the gates that, in his day, stood ever open. By the memory

of his kindness, and by the hospitality of the roof which seems to have become almost thine own, I conjure thee look upon his sept with pity. We never injured thee in word or work, and many a time our hands have dressed thy food."

"Rise, Eithne," said the thanist, lifting her from the earth. "Thou dost not know the nature of thy peril, nor how it yet may be avoided. Implore not me, for mercy lies not with me; but hear me patiently awhile."

He led the maiden to a tripod, the seat of which was formed of the variegated marble of Kenmare, and, standing at a little distance, said:

"I am not one of those who seek to cover, under specious pretexts, the machinery of their own selfish passions. What I am I care not thou shouldst see, whether it move thy pity or abhorrence. I said that mercy did not lie with me, and yet it is in my power to save, or to destroy thee. The former I can do, but if it be so, thou canst not sure, deny me some return."

"I would—I will make any in my power," said Eithne, expanding her hands as if inviting the demand. "Tell me what thou requirest, and I will do my utmost to fulfil it."

"'Tis fairly spoken," said the thanist, "if thou wilt but perform it half so fairly. Dissolve," he added, approaching nigher, and bending to her ear, "dissolve this union with the young usurper, wed with one who can befriend thy sept, and be a sure protector to thyself."

Astonishment for the moment took place of every other feeling in the breast of Eithne, so that she did nothing more for some moments than gaze on the speaker, who continued to address her, without observing in the dim rush-light the alteration which his words had occasioned in her countenance.

"One too," he added, "superior to the Ithian in accomplishments, in genius, and in letters; a poet and a

scholar, young and well-formed, and in external graces scarce excelled by any." He was proceeding further to expatiate on the attractions of his client, when Eithne, recovering from her surprise, interrupted him.

"And is it possible," she exclaimed, "that thou canst seriously urge me to forswear the faith that I have pledged to Elim? for, however thou hast heard the tale, it is the very truth. Or canst thou imagine that I should hear, with aught but anger, thy eulogies of this young friend of thine? Is this the only means of safety left me?"

"I say not even this is certain," answered Baseg, "but if thou do this, all my influence shall be exerted to save thee from the violence of the Vikings."

"Then, hear me, Baseg," answered Eithne, speaking in a firmer and a deeper tone, "if I were at this instant in their gloomy caverns, where it is said their fearful deities are invoked with rites too horrid to be named, and if consent could render me immortal, I had rather die that fearful death they give than utter it."

"Even take thy choice," said Baseg, going towards the door, "I have done my part, and now thou canst not blame me."

He departed, having expected nothing but a refusal at this interview, and leaving her to combat with her sense of the approaching danger, at which he darkly hinted. Eithne had heard enough of the dreadful practices of these detested pirates to shudder at the consequences of her refusal.

"I will be true," she said, "I will be firm, although the worst should follow. Oh, Elim, haste! Oh, Elim, tarry not, or all is lost. Oh, guardian spirits of this saintly isle, lift up your radiant hands for us, that we may not perish by the hate of those unholy plunderers! Speed, faithful servant, speed through storm and gloom, and bring relief to the mistress thou hast loved so faithfully."

She cast herself upon her bed of the wild deer skins,

and remained listening to the beating wind and rain, until a troubled sleep removed her consciousness without diminishing her misery. Visions of the most appalling description succeeded her real apprehensions, and she woke to the uncertain light of morning, at the very instant when, in her dreams, a band of fierce Vikings were dragging her, with loud shouts, to the foot of their blood-stained altars, and the island rang from shore to shore with war.

The sun had not shone upon the gloomy terrors of the night, when Baseg returned to renew his instances and menaces. He did not, however, manifest the least appearance of anger or of anxiety upon his own account, but counselled Eithne in the manner of a friend who saw her standing in an imminent danger, and wished to urge her to the measures necessary for her own safety.

"Thou dost not know," he said, "the character of those whose fury thou bravest with so much ease. They are the progeny of a race that made the masters of the world turn pale. I will not pain thee with the horrible details of all their mystic rites; the hideous modes of augury with which the dying victim furnishes his slayers; nor all the fearful ceremonies that follow their inhuman offerings. They are the foes whom thou hast now to dread, and in whose power thou dwellest. To-night they feast in the Dun at Tuathal's invitation, and thou thyself shalt see the race thou fearest. I'll tell thee more:—this morning, the Raven, on the Vikingr's standard, was seen to droop the wings, a fearful omen of the coming enterprise. The sulky race, at all times formidable, are never so dangerous as in their moments of superstitious dejection, and then it is that hope of mercy is most vain and idle. And now thou knowest with whom thou hast to deal. Consider well the proposal I have made, and take what part thou wilt, for mine is done. If thou consent, Elim, indeed, must lose his principality, and thee, his

promised bride; but Inisfail will not be torn by war, and not a northern battle-axe shall drench its thirsty edge upon her hills. Deny me, and for ages yet to come, the Danes shall be a proverb in the mouths of her children, when they would speak of bloodshed and oppression."

He left the presence of Eithne without waiting a reply, and throwing his hood over his brow, walked quickly toward the isle in which the temple stood. Two of the magi, who stood at the porch, flung the door wide open to admit him, and he entered without speaking, suffering it to close behind him as before. The only light which was admitted from outside came through the door, so that now, when it was closed, although the morning was already bright, the temple remained wrapt in total darkness. Baseg, however, knew the place sufficiently well to advance without hesitation, and after traversing a considerable space, he paused, on a sudden, and called, in a loud voice:

"Heida! Heida, the prophetess! come forth!"

"Who calls me from my watch?" asked a shrill and broken voice, that bore the accents of a female.

"Thou mayest be free and open," said the thanist, "it is the Runner, Baseg, and alone."

As he finished speaking, a curtain was drawn behind the altar, from which the armilla hung, and a recess disclosed, so strongly illuminated as to cast a doubtful light outside, over the darkened vault of the temple. An altar appeared within, plated with sheets of iron, from which ascended the perpetual fire, by which an aged woman sat, as if to watch the flame.

"Heida," said Baseg, "you changed the Reafan standard, as I bade thee, in the Vikingr's ship?"

The woman took from a corner a banner, bearing the device of a raven with outspread wings, in act to fly, which she unfolded in the sight of Baseg.

"I see," said the thanist, "and I will not be ungrate-

ful. The drooping pinions have been substituted. It is very well. A wandering scald observed the fearful augury at dawn, and spread the panic through the fleet. There is one thing more that I must thank thee for. To-night thou wilt be called upon to name the victim whom the gods require. Observe my glance, and wheresoever it falls, there let thy choice fall too. To-morrow we will have the happy augury restored."

The woman lowered her head, in token of assent, and Baseg turned to depart. The hanging fell once more, and he returned through the darkness to the temple porch. The door was opened at his summons, and closed again as he departed from the grove into the light of the clear winter day.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

IN the peillice to which Kenric was borne, after the oath was taken which devoted him to Baseg and his cause, a number of men were employed in steeping, over a great fire, the peeled rushes which formed the torches used at their nocturnal assemblies, while others twisted them together and laid them against the wall to harden. Waking at frequent intervals from dreams of a still more fearful nature than those which troubled the sleep of the Ard-Drai's niece, yet not sufficiently to recover perfect consciousness, the shapes which passed between him and the flame became mingled with his sleeping visions, and gave them a striking vividness and force. Towards morning a deeper sleep succeeded those uncertain slumbers, and when he awoke the cottage was deserted, the men having disappeared, together with their manufacture.

A pang of the keenest anxiety and remorse seized on the heart of the Northumbrian, as a confused remem-

brance of the scene which had just closed the events of the preceding day came back upon his mind. While he strove to think on what his course should be, the door was opened, and Inguar entered, with an eager look.

"Kenric," said he, "you are wanted at the council of the Vikingr."

"I !" exclaimed Kenric, "I wanted at the council !"

"Dost thou so soon forget ?" said Inguar, with a gesture of surprise, "dost thou forget that thou art of the guild ?"

"I remember a hideous vision," said the Northumbrian, "but whether all a dream, or true in part, I am unable to declare. But what was done I utterly disclaim, nor will I move a step to execute what reason never would have recommended. Renounce my friend, my country (for it is in part my country), ay—and her faith, to pleasure thee and Baseg ?"

"Thy tone was different in East-Anglia once," said Inguar, with a gaze of mournful reproach.

"Taunt me not thus unjustly," said the scholar ; "thou knowest the course that I have trod with thee. Thou knowest what first thou foundest me in Northumberland. With thee I left it first, and darkness, storm, and danger ever since have been about my path like flitting fiends."

"This is but fauky," answered Inguar.

"I left it," continued Kenric, "and well thou knowest if my evils have been fanciful. My childhood was instructed in that faith which now thou urgest me to contemn and to abandon; my earliest thoughts of virtue blended with it. Its mysteries I treasured in my soul, its rites I practised with the fervour of a young and ardent spirit. I was happy in its bosom. My conscience was pure, my mind serene and quiet, my heart at rest, my hope untroubled, bright; my love unchanging—my very fear was sweet; my very trembling was delicious; the

path of duty straight and clear before me. Now it is otherwise. I speak not of the faded feeling of religion, my succour and my joy; I speak not of those mysteries I have ceased to venerate, nor of those rites that I have ceased to practise. But my own breast! the hell of my own breast!—my conscience! What is that? A knot of serpents, twined in Gordian perplexity! My mind, a midnight in itself! my heart, a hell! my hope, despair! my love, a traitor's love! my fear, a useless fear! my trembling, an unprofitable horror! my path, a growing labyrinth, where reason every day is more disturbed. My murdered mother! my forsaken father! my home forgot! my duties all despised! These are the fruits of that accursed friendship to which thou chargest me now with being false."

"Thy feelings, Kenric," said the Scandinavian, after a pause, and in a soothing tone, "thy feelings hurry thee away from wisdom."

"Wisdom!" cried Kenric, "tellest thou me of wisdom? If fancy and if feeling both were false, yet wisdom would upbraid me with my weakness. 'Thou fool!' it whispers me, from night to night, 'thou knowest that virtue only is the end of temporal life, and when wert thou most virtuous? Thou knowest what is to be the recompense of temporal virtue, and when didst thou think most, do most, long most, and suffer most for that reward? Thou senseless, whither didst thou seek to wander? This wisdom says, true wisdom," added Kenric. "This is the voice of reason, and the true one. No, perished honour—no, forsaken virtue, if I have lost, at least I will not wrong you."

Saying this he covered his eyes with one hand, and leaned long in silence on the table. Inguar would have said something, but, at the motion of his frame, Kenric waved his hand softly, as if to signify that he did not wish to be disturbed.

After a little time, the Swede arose gently, and seemed about to leave the house.

"I will see thee again, Kenric," said he, "when thou art more at peace—when thou art better inclined to do justice to thy friend and to thyself."

"My friend!" said Kenric, with a smile.

"Thy friend, thy patient friend," cried Inguar, looking round upon him with an appearance of anger. "Thy friend, whose brain is weary of devising modes of compassing thy happiness, and who finds all his recompense from thee in base suspicion and ungrateful taunts. Darest thou deny," he continued, observing Kenric still smile, and fixing his glance upon him, "darest thou deny what I have sacrificed? what I have wrought to do thee lasting service? what I am labouring at this moment to accomplish? Beware, beware," he added, "to what measure I may be provoked."

"What measure, prithee?" asked the Northumbrian.

"Thy hope, thy brightest hope, is in my hands," said Inguar; "I hold the painted vase that holds thy happiness. Beware, lest I may be provoked to break it."

"Thou holdest what vase? what painted vase?" said Kenric. "Leave riddles, and speak plainly. The less of poetry thou handlest, Inguar, the clearer wilt thy wit appear, believe me."

"Thy Eithne!" Inguar cried, aloud, "is that a riddle? The hope that brought thee from Muingharid here—that I have raised, and that I can destroy! Like you that poetry? Beware it, Kenric."

"I will," said the Northumbrian.

"I told thee Eithne was in Coom nan Druadh," continued the Scandinavian, "'twas by my agency that she was restored to the roof of her fathers, and by my agency again she may be hurried hither—thither—any where—every where, that I may order."

"If thou design such movement for the maiden," re-

turned Kenric, "thou mayest spare thy labour, and keep thy vapid and ill-acted anger for some happier time, for I have now resolved upon my part. I will do nothing more, say nothing more to Baseg."

"What then?" said Inguar.

"Fly hence," replied the Anglo-Saxon, "and mourn my failure and my weakness at a distance."

"Ay, fly to Elim, mourn in the Rath," said Inguar, with a sneer. "And think you, Baseg now will suffer your departure?"

"If he will not," said Kenric, "I can stay here, or die here, if he will, but move a finger against Elim I will not, though joint by joint should be hewn off to force me. I will not join this council of marauders. Urge me no more; my brains are not a stripling's, to be purloined through the ears with eloquent words. There was a time thy words had influence, but that is past. Thy menaces I hold as lightly too. Away! Thou threatenest proudly, Inguar, but thy threats are empty as thy promises are vain. I have weightier thoughts at present on my mind than thy last treachery, dreadful as it is, and far beyond all former injuries. Go, Inguar, go; leave me to myself."

The Swede stood for a long time motionless, with his head bent down, and his forehead dark with the fury of disappointed cunning.

"Go, go," said Kenric, calmly motioning him away; "thou sayest indeed the truth. My mind is not sufficiently at peace to hear thee speak. Go, break that vase, go fashion some new scheme of happiness; go hurry Eithne in that kind of whirlwind; go plot new tortures for the hearts of men; go weave new meshes for their souls—be-gone! Go any where thou wilt, so thou take thyself away from eyes that are weary of beholding thee, and a heart that thou hast broken."

So saying, he turned aside, in order that he might not

look again on the Scandinavian. The latter paused for a little time, as if deliberating what he should do.

"Kenric," said he, turning round once more when he had reached the door, "whatever thou mayest think, I can explain this matter if thou wilt."

Not finding Kenric disposed to notice him, he added :

"I go then, as thou biddest, but not in shame, nor guilt, nor even in anger. I go to bring thee proof that thou hast wronged me, to show thee that, whatever be thy thought, it wrongs me foully if it says I sought thine evil."

"Impudent seducer!" said Kenric to himself, as he heard the wicket close behind the Swede. He went out himself, soon after him, in order to meditate more at leisure, in the freshness of the evening air, and by the side of the little river which ran bubbling through the Coom. He meditated once more the stealing away from the valley; but besides that he supposed Inguar was not without having taken precautions to prevent his escape, in case he should attempt it, he was, himself, unwilling to depart while yet so ignorant of Eithne's condition. Yet she was in the Coom, and bitterly now did he recall his subterfuge to Elim. His thoughts, however, after some time, were diverted from this subject by the sound of a cruit on the river side, and a voice, which he remembered to have heard before, singing some lines, of which the following may give something like the sense :

L.

War, War! horrid War
Fly our lonely plain,
Guide fleet and far,
Thy fiery car
And never come again!
And never,
Never come again!

II.

Peace! Peace! smiling Peace!
Bless our lonely plain,
Guide swiftly here,
Thy mild career,
And never go again!
And never,
Never go again!

Little as the words conveyed, the voice of the singer, and the accomplished skill with which he touched the instrument, were sufficient to awaken Kenric's interest, even if he had not recognised in the singer the hereditary filé of the Ard-Drai's household, the same who sung the welcome song to Elim, and who still bore upon his cloak the golden clasp which the young Ithian had given him as a guerdon. From this person Kenric learned that the utmost gloom and anxiety had spread amongst the northmen in the Coom, the consequence of many a gloomy angury, and that it had already required all the influence of Baseg to prevent their re-embarking, and pursuing their marauding life on more propitious coasts.

"Would they were on the Baltic once again," said Kenric; "but knowest thou anything of Eithne, the niece of the deceased Ard-Drai?"

"I know not what may have happened her of late," replied the filé, "but, on her first arrival in the valley, I saw her given up to Baseg's hands by Tuathal himself. She is detained a prisoner in the Dun, where the northmen feast to-night."

Kenric was silent, and letting the minstrel know where he might always find him, returned, with a troubled spirit, to the peillice in which he lived, and, falling asleep by his fireside, dreamed vividly of all that he had heard and witnessed during the day; of Eithne, of Tuathal, and other persons, who became strangely blended in his visions with the wonders of the wild mythology which he had been

lately studying. Sometimes the faithless Oder, with the countenance of Elim, passed rapidly along before his eyes; and, while he wondered at his sudden speed, came Eithne, following in the cat-drawn car of Freya, seeking her lord, and weeping golden tears upon his track. Now Balder, with inviting hand, opened to him the portals of his spotless palace, Breidalbik, where nought that is impure can obtain admission; but, as he entered the golden gates, he started back, on detecting, beneath the beautiful ringlets of the god, the guileful eyes of his betrayer—Inguar. Now he sat with Torsete, the peace-maker, in the halls of Blitner, upheld by golden pillars, and covered with a roof of silver; but, as he whispered in his ear a prayer that he would make him reconciled to Elim, his blood ran cold when the god looked slowly round, and showed the hoary brows and the malignant smile of Baseg.

CHAPTER LXXV.

THE Scandinavians assembled at the feast, but with no festive looks. The scalds were forbid to play, the warriors forbore their sleights of skill, and they took their viands in gloom and silence, as at a feast of sorrow. Eithne, closely veiled, was placed on the right hand of Baseg; and on Tuathal's left, and endeavoured, through the filmy flax, to discern the countenances and forms of those redoubtable warriors whose characters she had been taught to regard with so much fear and horror. On one side of the apartment sat the Saxon followers of Baseg, distinguished by their short cloaks, in many instances edged with gold, and contrasting strongly with the flowing mantles and deep hoods of the children of

Mogh Ruith who sat opposite. The end of the apartment was filled by the Vikingr, comprising adventurers from Norland, from Denkirke, and nearly all the coasts which bordered on the northern seas, most of them attired in the plaided stuff which originated with the Teutons. On this stern circle the enormous torches cast a fiery glare, that suited not amiss the character of violence suppressed, which marked the assembly, and which resembled the insecure repose of a train of artillery, full charged, and waiting but the incentive spark to spread destruction round them.

In the midst of this profound silence, a murmur arose without, and presently after, those who sat near the doorway observed a long double train of torches crossing the bridge, the reflection of which, in the waters underneath, gave a striking effect to the procession.

"It is the prophetess!" was the murmur which spread amongst the guests, and Eithne, startled by the noise, involuntarily put aside her veil to discover what had occasioned it. She beheld, in the act of crossing the threshold, a woman, drooping with age, and bearing in her hand a long divining wand, which she used to direct her somewhat feeble steps. Fifteen young virgins, clothed in robes of white, attended in her train, and double that number of armed warriors formed files on either side of the venerated priestess, each bearing in his hand a lighted torch of pine. All rose to do honour to the prophetess, who was conducted, with great ceremony, to an elevated tripod at a little distance from the thanist.

"Heida," said Baseg, standing while he addressed her, "knowest thou the cause why thou art summoned hither?"

The priestess paused awhile, and then, raising her feeble head, replied:

"The Reafan droops the wing on the Vikingr's standard. I saw it in the clouds ere it appeared on earth."

"And how," asked Baseg, "can the omen be averted? Speak, Heida, and thy guerdon shall be great."

The priestess paused for a longer time than before, and then replied :—

"The gods demand a victim. The armilla must be wet with noble blood, if Odin's anger would be turned aside. The victim he demands is now amongst us."

A sudden murmur arose amongst the northmen, and all looked round and in each other's faces, as if to inquire in which might be discerned the writ of doom recorded by the Incendiary.

"Heida," said Baseg, "Odin shall be obeyed, but do thou point out the victim."

The priestess murmured long, but on the repeated instances of the thanist, raised her divining wand, and fixing her eyes on his, passed it round the circle with a slow and tremulous motion, while the deepest silence and suspense sunk suddenly upon the assembly. Eithne beheld the wand approaching her with an inward misgiving, for which the conversation of the preceding noon had given the fullest occasion. Her fears were verified by the event; for Heida, with a low moan, let fall the wand at her feet, and hurried from her tripod towards the door, uttering cries of terror and of pain. She crossed the threshold, followed by her train of attendants, and bearing in her hand a massy chain of gold, which Baseg had flung at her feet as a recompense for her prediction.

In the mean time, nothing could exceed the tumult which she left behind her. The Vikingr rose to claim their victim; the Saxons, at a signal given by Baseg, arose to second them, and the children of the Coom, with equal promptitude, arranged themselves, with bare and glittering skenes, around the daughter of their line of chiefs, not less beloved for her father's apostacy. The northmen, however, had been forewarned by Baseg to come armed; and were in numbers, as well as weapons, far superior to

the native kerne who prepared to resist them. Tuathal, with his brazen gen displayed, was about to strike at the advancing foe, when, Eithne, with a shriek, implored them not to stain the Ard-Drai's floor with blood.

"Hold back your hands," she cried, "put up thy sword, Tuathal! You cannot serve, and may destroy me. Strangers, I yield myself into your hands, but spare your violence here."

"And sayest thou so, most liberal of kinswomen?" cried Tuathal, putting her forcibly back out of the reach of harm. "Let it all proceed in order, if it please you."

Before he had finished speaking, the weapons had almost crossed in front, and the menaced conflict would have soon decided the matter in favour of the northmen, had not Baseg interposed his influence to allay the storm. He reminded Tuathal that the maiden was for the present in his charge, and added something, in a whisper, which seemed to change the temper of the latter into something more complying, while he pledged himself to the northmen, that he, as their chosen chief, and the elected Runner of the Gods, would not see Odin cheated of his victim. He thus contrived, amid much tumult on either side, to win the confidence of both, and to retain possession of Eithne, whom he led from the assembly, lest her presence might renew the dissension. Instead of conducting her to her apartment, he had her conveyed, under the escort of a troop of his own Saxons, to the temple, which she entered with a feeling of despair, as if already at the place of sacrifice. There she was lodged in a solitary chamber, adjoining that in which the priestess and her handmaids kept perpetual watch beside the fire of Odin.

"I conjure thee," said the maiden, as her keeper was about to leave the prison, "forget not that we were thy friends in need, and save me from this horrible extremity. Thou art aged, and must know, from frequent trial, how bitter it is to part from all we love."

"I do," replied the thanist, turning round upon her, with a countenance which evinced more emotion than she had ever seen him manifest before. "I know how hard it is to be robbed of name, of place, of power, of influence; to be banished from home, and all that makes home lovely."

"Then, by that experience," said Eithne, "I conjure thee pity me, and save me now."

"Thou conjurest with a most unlucky spell," said Baseg; "it binds the charm that thou wouldst seek to break. Yet do not throw the burthen thus on me. It still is in thy power to shun this fate, of which I half forewarned thee. Thou knowest the terms, and they can still avail thee."

"And this is all my hope," said Eithne, in a distinct voice."

Baseg gave answer in the affirmative, and Eithne, arising from her supplicating posture, suffered the thanist to depart without another word. With the comparative ease of mind accustomed to self government, and a heart that reproached its owner with no dark remembrances, she then prepared herself to meet her fate with decency and resignation. She performed, with attention and composure, the duties of religion which seemed adapted to her condition, and, after these were concluded, went to rest upon her heap of rushes with a resigned and almost tranquil breast.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

SPEEDING all night through wind and rain, darkness and storm, the fugitive Duach arrived in the valley of Rath-Acdain as the fresh grey light of morn was spreading over the troubled waves of Inbhersceine. The keyriaght, or wandering herdsman, was driving his kine to their pas-

turage on the mountain side; and the seneschal inspected the ramparts, and caused the gates to be undone which made the Rath secure from nightly injury. Without loss of time, Duach procured admittance to the presence of Elim. It was only on the preceding morn that the Ithian had learned something of the proceedings in the valley, and of Eithne's disappearance, for not even her own dependents knew what had befallen their mistress. He had yielded to the persuasions of Macha and their kinsfolk, who urged him to repair his strength by sleep, in order that he might be the better qualified for a journey to O'Driscoll, on the following morn. He had already risen, and ordered Moyel to prepare the troop of gallóglachs, with which he always travelled. Some inferior leaders, amongst whom were Cairbre and Kieran, mentioned in an early chapter, being the same who rode with him on the morning when he first visited the Coom, the others bearing the titles of Fear Comhlann Mile, or Fear Comhlann Cead, according as the number of their followers varied, were receiving instructions for the management of their forces in his absence. At this moment, a kern appeared at the door, to inform the chief that a stranger desired to speak with him immediately.

"A stranger?" asked Elim, "of what sept, or country? Perhaps the bearer of a message from O'Driscoll."

"It is not so," replied the kern. "It is the daltin of the Hooded Lady, Duach, from Coom nan Druadh."

"Duach!" cried Elim, starting from his seat, "admit him instantly. Chieftains, you know your duty; I have some important business to discharge, and hope to-morrow to meet you in the mountains."

The chiefs departed, and Duach was admitted into the presence of the Ithian, who received him with an eagerness that, for the moment, almost deprived him of the power of utterance.

"Good fellow, bear with me awhile," he said, leaning

on the ashen javelin which he always carried about his person, in the chase or in the fight. "I well remember how thou lovedst thy mistress. I am not ashamed to let thee see my weakness."

"I could die for thee while thou tremblest so," said Duach. "Thou knowest her worth, and, if any chief in Inisfail deserved her, thou art he."

"Speak low," said Elim, growing still more pale, even with the effort to maintain his firmness; "there are women lodged in the next apartment. They told me thou wert with Eithne, when she left her dwelling in the Coom, to which she has not returned. What accident prevented her?"

"The chance of war," said Duach, hastily.

"I see," said Elim, speaking at broken intervals. "Thou need'st not tell me more. My dearest hope on earth is taken from me, but I am patient of my grief. Ay, so it is. Well, let them now come on. The war is pleasing now. What do I say? Defend me from these horrors, gracious heaven! Preserve my reason sound—my purpose firm. Thou knowest at some time we should have been parted, perhaps when years of love and tried fidelity had made that parting even bitterer than now. Well, now to action. These ruffian northmen must not spoil the land, though it contain no farther hope for me. My native soil must not be quite forgot, because the dearest gift she gave is lost to me for ever. Well, so it is. What, Moyel! is the hobbie at the rampart? See that the troops are ready on the instant. Good fellow, help me to make fast the girdle. Poor Kenric, 'tis his dagger—his gaudy Gaulish toy. Well, be it so. We are men still, Duach, are we not? The northmen soon will find us work enough to keep our thoughts from painful recollections. Poor Kenric, thou wilt grieve to hear that fate has made our fortunes even after all. Thy search is vain now, Kenric—thy peril wholly needless. As for this Ba-

seg, I regard him nothing—he can at most but give a change of masters to Rath-Acdain; but these sea-roving plunderers, now that they have once trod our tranquil shores, I fear, will leave their foot-marks deep on Inis-fail's green breast for many an age to come. My sciath, good fellow."

Duach, unable to reply, from the rapidity with which Elim poured forth his thoughts, as if to overcome by volubility the anguish that was struggling at his heart, walked toward the wall, on which the shield of O'Haedha hung. It was a piece of armour, framed of wicker work, and covered with leather and shining plates of brass.

"But that it were a thankless crime to indulge the thought," continued the heart-stricken young warrior, "I had as lief that part of my accoutrement was spared. But that's a folly, that's a weakness, is it not? 'Tis thus, they say, that love-sick poets feel in such occasions, is it not? My gen, it hung beneath the sciath. Whatever coasts these Baltic plunderers touch, have reason long to rue their first descent. They say that Charlemagne shed tears to see them, although he lived not to——The chance of war! Why, we must take it, though it comes like ruin; I am content. Eithne has perished, yet I will not murmur."

He sat on the tripod, and suddenly suspended all speech and motion, gazing fixedly before him, as if wrapt in the most profound and absorbing meditation.

"Let Bel be praised," said Duach, slowly approaching, and bending his bony person a little forward, "that thou hast given me space to speak a word. I did not say that Eithne was destroyed—she is not dead, thou most long-spoken Ithian."

"Not dead!" cried Elim, starting from his mood of thought, while the blood rushed over his features, before he palled, and the brightest animation appeared in all his

frame. "Where is she then, good fellow? Is she close at hand. Is she well?"

"In truth," replied Duach, "if thou wert fifty chieftains—if thou wert even the Righ—nay in the face of Bel, if thou wert the Ard-righ of Inisfail, Duach will take his time to answer thee. Duach is not a clod. He will not have his news pulled out of him as thou wouldst shake apples out of a wicker basket."

"Good Duach, speak as thou wilt," replied Elim, "but keep me not in pain. Tell me that she is safe, and say what else thou wilt."

"'Tis fairly offered," said Duach, "but though thou madest me Flaith (a story to tell in truth) within this hour, I could not tell thee she is safe. That she was well last night, and, I believe, is still in health, is certain."

"And is that nothing?" cried Elim, in an exulting tone, while, for a moment, he raised his eyes, with an expression of the deepest gratitude, "I tell thee, there have been times, within the last two days, when I could have suffered anything that Baseg could inflict to hear so much of Eithne. But tell me where she is, and in whose charge? Thou hast made my blood course gladly in my veins once more."

"She is in the Coom," said Duach.

"And in whose charge?" asked Elin changing colour.

"In Baseg's, now."

"In Baseg's! That's a funeral sound again. But tell me all, from the beginning, Duach; I will be silent till thou hast told all."

The kern related all the circumstances of Eithne's capture, and his own escape, while Elim listened with the keenest attention until he had concluded.

"Thou hast done," said he, at length, when Duach ceased to speak, "thou hast done the duty of a brave and faithful servant, and shalt be so considered. And now, without another word, to horse, and away at once."

"Whither?" asked Duach.

"To the Coom, of course."

"Nay," said the kern, "to go there, true enough, the way is straight, but thou mayest find returning somewhat difficult."

"Why dost thou say so, Duach?" asked the chieftain.

"Because I have myself observed their force. The Finn Geinte alone would outnumber thee, without speaking of the score of tribes that have poured in from Fear-amuighe* Fene, and the hills of Muscraighe.† Samhuin never crazed a wilder brain, if thou entrust thyself unguarded amid such a wood of battle-axes."

Elim paced to and fro a little while, seeming perplexed, and stopping short at times, as if to investigate a rising suggestion.

"It matters not!" he cried, at length, with a sudden burst of fervour. "Be they as countless as the summer leaves, as the billows of the sea they make their home, Rath-Aedain still can muster hearts and hands that will not fail their master in his hour of need. Wait for O'Driscoll? No, he could not, with his utmost expedition, reach the Coom before to-morrow, and it is horrible to think an instant on all that might be acted in the interval. No, thou, or Moyel, or some other messenger, shall go to Cleir and quicken the Ceannfinny, while I conduct our troops into the mountains. What, Moyel!" he continued, hastening into the adjoining apartment, which was crowded with retainers of the household. "Away, and send the war-cry through the sept! Let every blade and point throughout the territory be mustered in the vale ere noon, and thou Ciasral," addressing the old soldier, who, on his first return from Muingharid, remarked his capability for action, "do thou light up the beacon on the

* Fermoy.

† Muskerry.

nighest hill, that all may understand the cry when it is heard. Yes, Duach!" he continued, as he returned to his own apartment, with a countenance glowing, and eyes sparkling with the sanguine ardour of vigour and inexperience combined; "yes, we shall drive these northmen from the Coom. We shall teach this Baseg—throw down my helm, for I too must take horse upon the instant. We'll teach this Baseg what a thing it is to drag in foreign aid to forward his own selfish purposes, and plant the hungry carrion bird of the Baltic where he might tear the vitals of his country—as yet, alas! he may. We'll teach—Ah, Macha! mother! standest thou there? She is found, my mother!"

So saying, he expanded his arms, and all mailed, and helmed, and shielded, as he was, clasped to his heart, with fervour, the worn and care-struck figure of Macha, who, aroused by the unusual noise, had stood for some moments in the doorway, gazing with wonder on her son, and awaiting an opportunity to speak.

"She is found!" he repeated, exultingly, removing Macha a little from his embrace, and gazing tenderly on her countenance, as if delighted with the joy he saw reflected in it. "Thou who hast always shared my joys and sorrows, rejoice with Elim now, for he is not yet bereft—not yet undone."

"I give thee joy, dear child," said Macha, affectionately returning the caress, "but where is Eithne?"

Elim started, as if he had been slumbering on his business, and, hastily fastening his helmet over his abundant locks, replied, in a rapid tone:

"True—true—our work is yet not well begun. I am going for her; mother, fare you well!"

"And thou art going for what thou never wilt bring home," said Duach, breaking in upon the scene; "there are more battle-axes round her than pebbles on the shore of Inbhersceine."

"I have gallant followers, and our cause is good," said Elim, hastening to begone.

"And because thy followers are brave," said Duach, "thou wouldst be rid of them, and because thy cause is good, thou wouldst destroy it."

"Thou art not bound on any rashness, Elim?" said Macha, raising her hand, as if to entreat him to pause.

"In truth, but he is," said Duach; "he is going to the Coom with his handful of gallóglachs, where, to speak in Eithne's words, expressed to me but yesterday night—'his whole sept would be lost in the encounter as readily as a curach in a cataract.'"

"Did Eithne say so?" asked Elim, in an altered tone.

"She did," replied the kern, "and that it were better, at all events, to wait the arrival of O'Driscoll. And this she bade me give thee for a token."

Saying this, he handed Elim the bodkin. The latter recognized it as that which usually bound the veil which Eithne wore, and took it with a look of tenderness and affection.

"It was not needed," he added, making the ornament fast in the secret folds of his own attire, "thou art trustworthy on thine own report. And now be satisfied. Travel to Cleir I assuredly will not; but this I am content to do: at noon, I will conduct our troops to the mountains of Gleannamhnach, which overlook the Coom, on the eastern side, and there await O'Driscoll, till the morning, or longer, if my scouts inform me that it may be done with safety. Meantime, do thou, my faithful messenger, and Moyel, haste to Cleir with the troop which was intended to accompany myself. I have a friend in the Coom, and he will help me to know the moment to which I may defer the onset."

"Thou meanest the merry Saxon, with the long head of learning," said Duach, "that used to talk such pleas

altry with Eithne as kept the household ever like a wedding."

"The same," said Elim.

"Trust not in him," said the kern, "for I doubt him for a double-hearted traitor."

"How is this?" said Elim, turning quick upon him. "Upon what grounds dost thou say this?"

"On very sure grounds," answered Duach, "and I will let thee know them, if thou wilt give attention for a while."

"Speak on," said Elim, while he and Macha interchanged a conscious glance.

"I will then," answered Duach; and advancing slowly into the centre of the apartment, he remained for some time rubbing his coolun with his hand, as if labouring to put his narrative in order.

"In the Carcair it happened. Yes. 'What do you think?' says he. Baseg, I mean, the thanist. Lying, I was, in this manner, in a corner of the Carcair, thinking how I should get out, for what else was my business there? And there I heard them talking, and they spoke of Kenric as their friend and ally—and that it could be easily done, they said, meaning Eithne, if thou wouldst know, and something they said of him and Eithne which I could not gather. But this same Kenric is a rotten reed. The two of them, I heard by accident, in the sight of Bel; Baseg, and that Ansruth, who is as much an Ansruth as thou or I, but a pirate Dane, and as thorough a Lock Lannach* as the rest."

"Art thou sure of this, art thou sure that stranger was not what he seemed?" asked Elim, slightly colouring.

"I saw him in the Coom with my own eyes," said Duach, "and know him to be nothing of what he pre-

* Sea-warrior.

tended, although the rogue could tell his tale so roundly." Elim paused, while a crowd of recollections pressed upon his mind, and murmured in a tone of deep amazement:

"If it were possible—Vuscfraë's hint—a moment, but a moment's pause. He said the Ansruth was an old acquaintance. Where were they known? East-Anglia? Baseg? both were in Inismore—and Kenric? What!" he exclaimed aloud, throwing up his hands, and stopping short in his hurried walk, as if startled by a bolt of lightning. "Is this the day that breaks, or new suspicion? Suspicion! It is evident as noon. The time, the place, the persons all accord—I am basely wronged! They are all a knot of vile conspirators, and he whom most I trusted is amongst them."

"His father's heat," said Macha, involuntarily uttering her thoughts aloud, "his father's heat comes to him in these terrible times, where most there is need of coolness and precaution."

"Away!" cried Elim, waving his hand, as if to dash aside a painful thought, "I held him as a brother, let it pass. Why art thou there?" he continued, in a loud voice. "Away! Thou hast thy orders, take the troop of gallóglachs, and Moyel with them; fly like the wind, like thought; speed, for the life of Eithne. I erred, most weakly erred, but that is past, and now let me bend all my force to repair the evil. In league with Baseg! It is very strange! Most strange! He warned me himself against the Finn Geinte. 'Tis very strange! and yet it is his character; he was struggling then to cling to his fidelity, and it has failed him since."

The young chieftain proceeded to make the necessary preparations for his departure. The beacon, a fire composed of a small wooden cask filled with tar, and placed at the top of a long pole, was lighted on the highest hill in the neighbourhood; and the war-cry of the sept was

echoed from throat to throat, till it rang round all the territory of the Ithian leader.* The mountaineers of Sliabh Miscaisi (Miscish) beheld the alarm-fire from their scattered hamlets, and hastened to assume their ready arms; the shepherds of Gleangarbh heard the cry, and drove their flocks to pen; the tumult spread through every township in the disputed principality, and, long ere noon, the troops of kerne, and gallóglachs, of hobbeler and heavy-armed marcsliadh, had begun to assemble from different quarters in the valley of Rath-Acdain, like rivulets settling in a central lake.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

WHILE Elim was receiving from Duach an account of the Northumbrian's duplicity, the latter, long awaked from troubled sleep, and pressed anew by the urgent instances of Inguar, had left the hut in which he slept, and accompanied the latter into the grove of oaks by which the temple was surrounded.

"Thou knowest," said Inguar, as they came to a stand in one of the closest recesses of the wood, "that thou hast taken an oath to us; and thou hast never bound thyself so to Elim."

"Thou sayest the truth," replied Kenric, with a haggard and wavering look, like one about to dare some desperate chance—appalled, and yet unwilling to retire. "I never bound myself by oath to Elim."

"Besides, thou knowest his right at least is doubtful."

"He almost avowed as much to me himself," said Kenric.

* See Note 54. The summoning of a Clann.

"And for priority of time, long ere thou hadst heard of this disputed claim, thou hadst pledged thyself to Baseg."

"Ay, but in ignorance," replied the Northumbrian. "Yet where is Eithne? My head is burning hot, and I feel at thinking of her, as if the cool sea-wind of Inbher-sceine were beating on it once again. I pray thee let me speak with her awhile."

"Thou shalt do so," replied the Swede, "but patience! Come in and tell the thanist thou art ready."

"Oh, Inguar! I had horrid dreams last night."

"I might suppose it," said Inguar, laughing, "to judge by that pale cheek and wandering eye. Psha, Kenric, be a man, and scorn those fancies."

"My mother's ghost appeared to me in sleep," said Kenric, "and I thought her left hand burned like a lighted torch. She smiled when she saw me gaze upon it, and pointing to it with the other hand, said in the sweetest tone, 'Tis painful, but it is for thee I suffer it.'"

"Come, come," said Inguar, "the thanist will be impatient."

"And then," said Kenric, "I thought I was again at the thanist's festival, and Eithne by my side, arrayed in white, and with a bridal chaplet on her head; when, presently after, by what circumstance I know not, the banquet hall became the temple, and Eithne lay dead at my feet; while, as I looked up in wonder, the gloomy image of your war god, Odin, pointing down with his giant finger on the corpse, said, with a hideous smile, 'Take her, wed her, and serve me well.'"

At this moment, the burst of tabors, violins, horns, and trumpets, on the plain without the grove, broke in upon their conference.

"Hear me," said Inguar, hastily approaching the Northumbrian, "and let this consideration strengthen thee. On thy compliance with the wish of Baseg more now depends than thou art yet aware of. I am forbidden to speak

out, yet this much I will tell thee, at peril of my life. Thou knowest how Baseg hates the name of Elim. The lark that struggles in the falcon's gripe is surer of recovered liberty than Eithne in the power of Elim's enemy."

"Thou dost not say," whispered Kenric, with a face of horror, "that he would dare to practise on her life."

"His proposal to thyself," replied the Swede, "is proof that he harbours no malice against her. But there is not a torture that can wring the human heart which he would not inflict on Elim if he could; nor, if he thought her death would grieve him more than marrying thee, would Eithne live an hour."

"Inhuman tyrant!" cried Kenric, with a sudden burst of anguish and anxiety combined. "Can such malignant thoughts enter a human breast?"

"Hush, speak with more discretion," said Inguar, "or we may be overheard. That music accompanies the thanist to his house. I tell thee, let this war go as it will, Elim and Eithne never more shall meet. So, if not for thine own, for her sake, let the thanist have his way."

"Where is he now?" said Kenric, with a wavering look.

"Said I not he was going to his dwelling?" replied the Swede. "Follow me, and see him ere he grows impatient."

"I will," replied the Northumbrian. "I'll hear what he would say. Dost thou go thither?"

"Not yet," said Inguar, "I have business in the temple, Farewell! To-night our yearly festival begins, and the morn must decide the fate of Eithne."

They parted, Inguar to the temple, and Kenric, with an interrupted pace, and an agitated frame, the result of his own misgivings, that he was about to perpetrate some hideous infamy, in the direction of the thanist's house.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

O'DRISCOLL, the Sior Lamh, and his aged father, were found by Duach and his companions on the ramparts of their dwelling; the latter already in arms, and in the act of reviewing his troops as they passed before him, well accoutred and disciplined; though in such fashion, perhaps, as might rather move the wonder than the admiration of a modern hero. The dwelling of the aged Ceannfinny was seated, like most of the buildings of the period, on an eminence, from which, as he stood upon the ramparts, leaning on an oaken staff, and suffering the wild sea-breeze to sport with his grey locks, he watched, with a delighted eye, the military procession pass at a little distance, and slowly wind along, until the van was hidden in the intricacies of the mountain. First came a large body of gal-lóglachs on foot, armed with the heavy spear, the sciath or wicker shield, the round helmet and long sword, with a shirt of mail and an under-dress, bearing a resemblance to the hacqueton of after times. Next came a troop of mounted knights, distinguished by the golden fleasg, an ornament equivalent to the Gaulish torques, which gave his surname to Manlius Torquatus. After these came a large body of the light-armed cavalry, called hobbeler, from the circumstance of their being mounted on the small and spirited hobbies indigenous to the isle, and close behind them a Cath, or legion of the kerne, some carrying the javelin, held by its leathern thong, some armed with diminutive bows and piercing arrows, resembling those whose flight was often so galling in the Scythian wilderness, while others bore the crann-tabhaill,* a kind of wooden sling, which they charged with brazen balls from

* See Note 3.

a pouch that hung at their sides. The procession was closed by a body of the *marc-sluadh*,* or heavily armed cavalry, being in fact little more than mounted *gallóglachs*, except in their using the battle-axe instead of the spear. By every horseman a bare-footed *daltin*, or attendant, bounded nimbly along; now holding by the furniture of the animal, and now, when greater speed was requisite, relieved by a seat on the croup. The bell, the drum, the cymbals, and the horn, with many another ancient instrument, gave a cheering animation to the scene, while, at a little distance from the aged *Ceannfinny*, sat his family file, who sung the following rude strain with all his force, accompanying the words with the shrill music of the droneless *piob-mala*: †

WAR-SONG OF O'DRISCOLL.

I.

From the shieling that stands by the lone mountain river,
Hurry, hurry down with the axe and the quiver ;
From the deep-seated Coom, from the storm-beaten highland,
Hurry, hurry down to the shores of your island.

Hurry down, hurry down !
Hurry, hurry ! &c.

II.

Gallóglach and kern, hurry down to the sea—
There the hungry Raven beak is gaping for a prey,
Fairé! to the onset! *Fairé!* to the shore!
Feast him with the pirate's flesh, the bird of gloom and gore!
Hurry down ! &c.

III.

Hurry, for the sons of Bel are mustering to meet ye ;
Hurry, by the beaten cliff the Nordman longs to greet *yé*,
Hurry from the mountain ! hurry, hurry to the plain !
Welcome him, and never let him leave our land again
Hurry down, &c.

* See Note 3.

† Bagpipe.

IV.

On the land a sulky wolf, and on the sea a shark
Hew the ruffian spoiler down and burn his gory bark !
Slayer of the unresisting ! ravager profane !
Leave the White-sea-tyrant's limbs to moulder on the plain.
Hurry down, &c.

Before the song had ended, and while his own troop of veteran gallóglachs were awaiting his summons to depart, the Sior Lamh observed a small troop of horse, in the costume of the O'Haedhas, appear on the hills over which his own van were marching out of sight, and gallop, with a speed that seemed to speak of imminent peril, towards the place on which he stood. As they approached more near, the foam which speckled the reeking coats of the animals, and the dust with which the riders were begrimed, showed that the whole journey must have been made with a similar speed, and O'Driscoll had no doubt that war was already raging on the boundaries of the Ithian sept.

"How, Moyel," cried the Ceannfinny, "are the Finn Geinte in the Rath?"

Duach pressed before to answer—"Not yet, O'Driscoll."

"How then?" said the Sior Lamh, who recognized the follower of Eithne, "is thy young mistress swallowed up in the earth, for I know nothing else that could send thee speeding at wild a rate?"

Duach, springing from his horse, and laying his scian at the Ceannfinny's feet, by way of greeting, informed him and his son briefly of the fate of Eithne, of his own escape, and of the meditated rashness of the youthful chief.

"Let Bel give Macha eloquence to keep him," said the kern, "until thou hast reached the Rath; for the foe are numerous enough to lay the whole sept as level as ever a field of wheat lay lodged by summer rain."

"What, Macha meddles in it?" said the Sior Lamh, "but no more of that—To horse! to horse, my comrades, and away! What, Duach, is it thus you mount your hobbies in the Coom?"

Saying this, he vaulted on his horse's back, with the agility of a stripling, while his armour clanged, and the animal bounded under him, when he had reached his seat, as if it shared his satisfaction. The troop set off at full speed, and soon overtook the main body of the forces of Cleir.

Elim, however, did not wait for their arrival. Before noon he had set off for the mountains near the Coom, leaving a strong party to defend the Rath, with orders to strengthen the ramparts by an additional guard of gallóglachs and slingers.

At nightfall, the Ithian force encamped amongst the mountains, in a position so convenient, that they could pour down upon the portion of the Coom in which the temple stood upon the readiest notice; and it was finally resolved to wait, till morning, the arrival of O'Driscoll with the troops from Cleir. Elim passed the greater part of the night, which was bright star-light, in listening to the sounds of revelry which filled the valley, and viewing the distant groups that were dispersed around the watch-fires in many places. The mountain on which he had encamped was the same by which Eithne had seen the kern descend on the preceding evening, and the spot which had been occupied by the Ithians was at some distance from the outermost of the thanist's lines of watch.

THE INVASION.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

THE earliest beams of the succeeding morn found Eithne sisen from her couch and kneeling, with hands close clasped and person motionless as a sculptured image, before the narrow opening which gave light to her narrow prison. She was startled from this posture of devotion by a noise at the door, which was presently after opened. A figure entered, wrapped in a cloak and hood, and the door was closed again, as if by another person who remained without. The stranger remained some time without moving, and Eithne, while she devoured the figure with her eyes, did not dare to break the silence which she had too much cause to fear must end in her destruction. At length, tormented by the long suspense, Eithne addressed him in a tone of deprecation :

“Why shouldst thou add this needless cruelty? If I must perish, let me hear my doom, and without more delay.”

“Eithne,” replied a low and broken voice from the cloak, “thou art nearer to a friend than thou believest.”

The maiden almost sprung from the drooping attitude of supplication which she had assumed, and cried aloud, with a look and gesture of the wildest joy, “Kenric! ’Tis Kenric! I am saved, ’Tis Kenric!”

“’Tis Kenric, indeed,” said the Northumbrian, while he dropped the hood and mantle from his shoulders. He would have proceeded, but the tumult of Eithne’s delight was too great, for some moments, to suffer her to contemplate anything but the presence of a friend, and the absorbing idea of present deliverance from the horrible fate she dreaded.

“And is it thou, indeed?” she said, with ecstasy. “If I were to die this hour, I am glad at heart to see thee,

very glad. I am sure I shall escape this horrid death, since thou art come—thou who hast spent so many happy days with Eithne.”

“It was for that I came,” replied the Anglo-Saxon.

“Thou wouldst tremble,” said Eithne, in a low and shuddering tone, “if thou knewest the character of those horrid men into whose hands I have fallen. Oh, Kenric! my dear friend, forgive me if I weary thee with selfish prayers, when I should say something of the joy I feel in seeing thee again, and seeing thee thus unexpectedly, when I thought the Coom contained no heart that could befriend us.”

“It is affection,” thought Kenric in his own mind, while he gazed, with an absent air, upon the ground. “It is affection—warm, and kind, and true, but not the love that Inguar would suggest.”

“Thou lookest not healthy, Kenric,” said Eithne, in a calmer tone, “and thou art troubled too—perhaps with cause. Perhaps—but say it is not so—perhaps thou hast perilled thy life to seek me here, and standest in equal danger now thyself.”

“It matters not,” the Northumbrian continued, communing still in silence with himself. “It is not now the time to balance hopes and fears, to question inclinations and dislikes. The step is taken, and the course begun, and to recede would be weakness, and not virtue.”

Those who have spent their early years in the practice of that purity and tender goodness of heart which practical virtue inculcates, may imagine something of the inward struggles which Kenric underwent, at finding himself thus upon the verge of perpetrating a hideous moral baseness, such as not all the subtlety of reasoning could palliate to his conscience. It is strange, that in the anguish of his struggles with himself, he almost railed at the holy counsels and instructions, which had given him what he now considered too clear a sight of the distinction between

right and wrong, and wished, in the bitterness of his spirit, that he had been left in ignorance of the nature of passion, in order that he might enjoy it with the less remorse. He envied the almost bestial indifference with which the untutored savages around him pursued and indulged their natural inclinations, and would even have resigned those gifts of mind, which were at the same time the theme of his pride, and the innocent cause of his misfortunes, that he might embrace, with a blunted heart, the worthless part he had already chosen. He feared it too; for amid all the radiant simplicity of Eithne's character, there was something in it of that hidden excellence, the influence of which is strong in proportion as it is concealed. But the last consideration, that what he looked on as the decisive step, had been already taken, made him dispel with an effort these wavering thoughts, and follow up his first design with an effort at determination.

"Eithne," said he, "I will not tell thee now by what means I am here. Let it be enough to say, that I am here by Baseg's will, and with the power, indeed, to give thee liberty; yet not without conditions."

"And what are they," asked Eithne, anxiously, "that Kenric would consent to bear from Baseg?"

"He has spoken with thee, himself," said Kenric.

"He has," replied the maiden, "and spoke to me of some conditions likewise."

She related with simplicity the conversations which had taken place between herself and Baseg, while Kenric listened with profound attention. When she had ended, the latter raised his head, and said in a gentle voice :

"And did he tell thee, Eithne, who this unhappy stranger is, for whom he sought thy sympathy so earnestly?"

"He did not name him," answered Eithne.

"I know him well," said Kenric; "and so dost thou too, Eithne, well and long."

Eithne paused for a little time, and said :

"It cannot be—what folly to suppose it?—it cannot be Tuathal. No, no! the description of the traitor Baseg proves it. No—this he could not dream of."

"Not in his maddest dreams," said the Northumbrian, "when Sedna Innaraigh and his code of tactics ran busiest in his fancy. No, Eithne, 'tis not he whose peace is troubled with such thoughts as these. It is one to whom thou art more than ever thou couldst be to him. Eithne, be patient for a time, and hear me. Thou never more wilt meet with Elim. Thy life thou mayest preserve from these dark savages, yet only by compliance with the will of Baseg, for the northmen hold the Coom as if it were their own. But for thy restoration to Rath-Aedain, or to the protection of its chief, if thou wert underneath the cairn already, that could not be more hopeless than it is."

"Sayest thou so?" said the maiden, in a tone of subdued emotion.

"Yet life and liberty are in thy power, and all beside that can make either desirable. Eithne, be rational, and yield to circumstances."

"What dost thou mean?" said Eithne, gazing on him with a look of utter perplexity.

"I know this young man's secret long," said Kenric, "I know that—that—"

"Thou knowest what, good Kenric?" asked the maiden, wondering at the strange mixture of boldness and confusion that appeared in his demeanor. "In these dismal circumstances, be plain at least, and let me comprehend thee. How wouldst thou counsel me to act toward Baseg? What didst thou mean but now?"

The consciousness of baseness, and his knowledge of Eithne's character, were too much for the forced assurance of the young scholar. He stammered out some confused and awkwardly worded sentences, and then, perceiving that he had already awaked an undefined alarm in

Eithne's mind, which must be satisfied, he broke forth into a torrent of the most impassioned language, avowing a long-cherished affection for the Ard-Drai's niece, and confessed that he was himself the suppliant for whom the thanist pleaded.

Astonishment for the moment deprived Eithne of the power of utterance, and almost of motion; and when she sought, at length, to speak, the impetuosity of Kenric's manner was so great as to prevent her saying a word.

"Forget," he said, "forget what cannot now be recollected to any happy purpose. Thou dost not wrong Elim, for thou robbest him of nothing. Eithne, I pray thee, say that I am heard. Wave not thy hand with that forbidding air. I cannot pause; I cannot hold my peace; look not upon me with that horrid look of pale and cold surprise. I am borne along, as on a rushing flood, and there is but one word that now can stay me."

"Kenric!" cried Eithne.

"No, not that," said Kenric, "that must not be the word, nor gesture neither." And proceeding until his language almost resembled that of one intoxicated, he ventured at length to take one of Eithne's hands in his. This action, however, aroused the natural energies of the betrothed bride, and using her utmost strength, she repelled the Northumbrian with an effort which made him stagger to a considerable distance.

"Hold off that traitor hand!" she exclaimed, with the deepest emotion. "I hope," she added, placing one hand against her side, and pressing the other close upon her brow, "I hope it is a dream, and that I have not seen so dire a change. What! Kenric! What! the gay, the gifted Kenric! He that was to me as a playmate and a brother! He whom I loved as if we had been friends from infancy! Thou art not Kenric, thou art some dark fiend that playest thy horrid game in Kenric's shape! The plighted friend of Elim here, in league with Baseg—

and for Eithne's ruin ! Kenric, this is the soil of Inis-fail. Is this thy gratitude ? Is this thy recollection ?”

The abashed Northumbrian, like one awaked from some incomprehensible delusion, bent down his head in silence, while his face was hidden by his hands.

“I loved thee like a sister,” continued Eithne, “and thus thou valuest my affection. And he was thy friend hardly less than mine. Thyself canst best declare in what he served thee; how long his roof has sheltered thee; his fire has warmed thee; and his heart has loved thee. When thou wert friendless he befriended thee; when thou wert helpless, he was thy helper; when all seemed wanting to thee he gave thee all.”

She paused, but Kenric offered not to move or interrupt her.

“And now,” said Eithne, “thou turnest upon him in his absence, and thou seekest to rob him of his nearest affections. I tell thee, Kenric, if thou wert twenty times a scholar, I tell thee thy course is treacherous and ungrateful. I tell thee, Kenric, I abhor thy falsehood.”

“My falsehood, Eithne ?”

“Ay, thy utter falsehood. Few ever had such friends as thou in Elim. He loved thee with a simple, manly love; a blessed and a most forbearing charity; and thou hast always answered his affection with coldness and distrust. If there be any stain in Elim's heart, it is that he has wasted it on thee.”

“Thou art hard upon me, Eithne,” answered Kenric; “thou art right, I know, but very hard upon me. From thee—from thee, these words indeed are bitter. Yet once I *was* the friend of truth and Elim. But 'twas a hurried—'twas a flying burst of sunshine in a life of gloom and sin. What now avails it that thou sayest the truth ? It is too late a lesson for Kenric. Ay, now I feel the warnings of Vuscfræa ! Now—now I feel the anger of my father—ay, now I feel Dommona's parting words !”

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While he spoke thus, Eithne stood motionless, as if perplexed in thought. Suddenly the sound of a trompa without appeared to have revived her previous apprehensions in their fullest force:

"Hark!" she exclaimed. "They are summoning their dreadful hosts already. Kenric, I have but one more word for thee. Remember, that what thou wast once, thou mayest become again. Remember, that if it be late for us, it may not yet be so for others."

Kenric sprung forward with a sudden rapture of delight peculiar to his too enthusiastic temper.

"I do!" he exclaimed in ecstasy; "I will! Thy generous confidence shall not be disappointed. I see my baseness—my unworthiness of him and thee, but I rejoice that it is not too late. No, Eithne—no, thou shalt not be deceived, thou hast redeemed, restored me to myself—to more than I, myself, could ever be. Thy life," he added, in a low and hurried whisper, after glancing at the door; "thy life is imminently threatened, but one whole day remains, and shall be well employed, if Kenric's mind or frame are capable of their common uses. Preserve thy courage firm, thy spirit undisturbed, but one day more. At morn relief may reach thee."

With these words, he bade the maiden a hurried farewell, and left the small and rush-strewn cell, his self-reproach absorbed, for the moment, by the glowing desire of a speedy reparation, and the prospect of success.

"One thought distresses me," said Eithne to herself, after remaining for some time silent in her chamber, "I taxed him—mean that I was—I taxed him with his obligations to Elim. Mean, and unkind! for Elim's generous spirit would grieve to know that such a speech was uttered. I have put a blot upon his noble work."

In the passage leading to the temple porch, Kenric met Inguar, who hastened with an eager face, to inquire into the result of his interview with Eithne. The re-action

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which had taken place in the mind of the Northumbrian now served him well, for it led Inguar to the natural conclusion that all had succeeded to his wish. He did not, therefore, press him with questions, but rested content with his reply, that "he had parted from the maiden in kindness and affection, but that she wished, nevertheless, to remain undisturbed during the day."

"I had not thought it possible," said Inguar, gazing after the retiring figure of the scholar. "What, novelty-hunting sex! Is there not one amongst you framed for constancy—not one who values principle more than pleasure? This fellow's vaunt and folly, in one hour, have made him of more account in the eyes of that hare-brained thing, than all the solid worth of her betrothed—or even her dread of Baseg and the Vikingr. A mouthful of bombastical words, with perhaps a flourish or two of the hands and feet, have done what the dread of death could not—have made her false and base as Baseg could desire."

The same answer which Kenric returned, would scarce have satisfied the wily thanist, had he not found him at a moment when all his attention was absorbed by tidings which had reached the Vikingr of the successful descent of his countrymen in the northern parts of the island. They had burned some villages, pillaged a number of monasteries, murdered the inmates, and carried off a load of booty to their ships.

"It is done!" said Baseg, with a look of triumph. "What they have achieved in other lands they will not fail to do in Inisfail. The first blow of the battle-axe has resounded on her shores. It will be centuries before the echo of the last shall die away."

Shocked at the unnatural exultation of a monster who thus rejoiced in the misfortune of his native land, the Northumbrian withdrew from his presence, and passing, without question, the troops, to whom his person had now

become familiar, soon found himself without the lines of the thanist's watch. Taking his way, with reviving spirits, towards Inbhersceine, he was met by a kern on the track, who informed him of Elim's present situation, and offered to conduct him to the camp. The Northumbrian accepted his proposal with readiness, but such were the intricacies of the way, that it was nightfall before he reached the heights, where Elim, notwithstanding his determination of falling on the Dun at morning, remained still close within his camp.

CHAPTER LXXX.

THE night fell calm and silent on the hills around the Coom, and all the preparations were made for battle on the following morn.

In the depth of night, while yet the troops of the conspirators were busied in their gloomy rites and coarse carousals, the spears of O'Driscoll and his auxiliaries first caught the glimmer of the moonlight over the crags of Coom-nan-Druadh. The law, however, which forbade any of the national troops to attack an enemy at night, or by surprise,* made them rest upon the mountain heights until the dawn of day. The night was calm and bright, and the sounds of frantic mirth, the interrupted music, and the hurrying of blazing torches to and fro amongst the tents, and along the river sides in the Coom, gave indications of confusion, which seemed to promise an easy conquest in the morning. The truth was, Baseg, although he had already learned that the native princes were aware of the designs on foot, had no apprehension

* See Note 55. Law against surprise.

that measures for their discomfiture could be adopted with so much promptitude.

Some deserters from the Coom brought intelligence to Elim, not only of the events upon the northern coasts, but of the confirmed apostacy of Kenric, and even (for the truth had already transpired) of the nature of the correspondence between him and Eithne. Wounded to the soul by this double treachery, which appeared not improbable from the light in which he already understood that Eithne was regarded by the Northumbrian, he retired to his tent for the night, and remained now meditating by his fire, now pacing to and fro, looking out into the air to see if yet the dawn was brightening in the east. Since he had first received what he considered sure intelligence of the Northumbrian's duplicity, though no reflection could lead to an extenuation of the act itself, yet much had occurred to soften his feelings towards the unhappy individual who had committed it. His natural weakness of mind was known to him, and the probability that he had been made the dupe of his designing enemy, by an appeal to passions which Kenric had too long neglected the art of governing, was sufficient to mitigate his censure with a feeling of compassion. Indulging such thoughts as these, he remained, on the night before the battle, meditating, amongst other things, on the fate of his wretched friend, longing for an opportunity of placing before him, in its real light, the nature of the course he had adopted, and regretting that he had not sooner forced himself into the confidence of a mind almost incapable of governing itself.

He was seated on his tripod, gazing on the dagger which the Northumbrian prized so highly, when he heard the sentry challenge outside the tent. The word was given, and presently a muffled figure entered hastily, and advancing towards the Ithian chief, fell prostrate at his feet. Elim, who imagined it was some fugitive from the

forces of the enemy, thus urged by fear or conscience to desert, encouraged him to speak without hesitation.

"Whoever thou art," said he, "tell out thy story, and fear nothing. Thou wilt find protection here, if not redress. What art thou stranger? speak!"

"One," replied the Northumbrian, "who has redress to give, not seek."

"Kenric!" cried Elim.

"Even that faithless wretch."

Elim, who had started at his first recognition of the Northumbrian, now paused for some time, while he considered in what way he should open an interview so unexpected. A long silence ensued, which was broken first by the Northumbrian:

"Elim," said the scholar, in an earnest tone, "whatever thou mayest think of what is past, no words that are within thy power to utter can heighten what I feel within my soul. Say what thou canst, the reproaches that are rising there this instant will make the heaviest of thine resemble praise."

The chieftain heard him for some time without a reply.

"Rise, Kenric, rise," he said, at length, "and let us meet as equals, at least, if not again as friends and early schoolfellows."

The Northumbrian complied without speaking, and continued for a long time silent; while Elim paused to deliberate within himself the part which he should act towards a person of so unhappy a disposition, the utter weakness and inconsistency of which he never before had fully understood. At length, remembering in their school days how much the Northumbrian had been the prey of misdirected feeling, his anger gave way to pity.

"I would not lose in an hour," said he, "the friendship I have made in years. We were fellows in our boyhood, Kenric. We had the same instructors—the same

course of duty. We drank at the same source the early draught of knowledge, and we started on our career in life with the same desire of spending it in virtue and in honour. Why have not our intentions been fulfilled? I have been often cautioned to beware of thee, no less by thine own friends than mine. I never heeded such suggestions, Kenric. I always trusted in thee. I thought thou wert incapable of falsehood. Why hast thou made me change that sentiment? If I were nothing to thee, was reputation nothing?—was virtue nothing? Was every manly quality that makes fidelity respectable—affection, principle, and all forgotten? And to what vile and miserable end? that thou mightest gain the person of a woman, whose love, were it possible to win it by so base a step, would not be worth the seeking. Was this the prize for which thou wert false to the friend that loved—to the land that gave thee all but birth? Thou art fallen! Kenric, fallen!—and I say it with an aching heart.”

The friendly lecture, and, more than what was said, the tone of feeling and affectionate grief with which it was uttered, moved the miserable and wayward Northumbrian to the very depths of his soul. As Elim spoke he twined his hands together, and extended them trembling towards his friend, while the bitter tears fell down in showers before his feet.

“I thank thee,” said he, “though thou hast pierced my mind as with a dagger’s blade. I have acted basely, and I feel it now. But what do I say?” he suddenly exclaimed, starting, as if a death strain sounded in his ear. “Away! Rouse up the camp! To arms, for Eithne’s life! Laggard that I am—she dies to-morrow morn, if the power of Baseg be not passed ere then. Stay not to question farther—Eithne is in the temple—she dies to propitiate the war god of the Finn Geinte. Thou knowest the whole! Away! the dawn is in the east.”

"I thank thee," said the Ithian, hastily snatching his sciath, and fastening on his helmet, "I understand the whole. What, sound to arms!" he cried, as he hastened to the door of the tent: "to arms, and give the war-cry of the sept! Yet, Kenric," he continued, "ere we part, perhaps to meet no more, let me restore thy property. Rememberest thou the gift of Charlemagne?"

Saying this, he unbound the girdle which held the Gaulish dagger of the scholar, and held it towards him.

"I found it," said he, "on the morning of your departure from Rath-Aedain, lying near the outskirts of the wood, and where the soil was trampled deep enough to give me cause of fear, on thy account."

"I do remember it," said Kenric, averting his head, with a quick shudder, and waving his hand behind him, "but I beseech you, keep it still. Keep it, I pray you Elim, for my sake, for a remembrance of me."

"Oh, no," said Elim, smiling, "when I take a remembrance from you, Kenric, it shall be a remembrance of peace, not strife."

Without reply, Kenric took the weapon, and made the girdle fast around his waist, while Elim, regarded him with a smile that had, at least, as much of sorrow as of reproach in its expression.

Meanwhile the stoc sounded in the camp, the war-cry of the sept was iterated far and wide among the hills; the gallóglachs seized their helms and heavy battle-axes, the horses neighed in the defiles far beneath, and the kerne, starting from beneath the coarse grey coat of frieze, which was their tent at night, and covering by day, arranged in haste their brazen scians, their slings, and slender javelins.

The war-cry of O'Driscoll was mingled with that of the Ithian sept, and soon after deep silence sunk again on either camp, which was only interrupted by the bustling of the troops, and the occasional voices of the

commanders, as they sought to put their companies in order.

On a sudden, the sound of a goll-trompa, or Danish trumpet, from the Coom, showed that the northmen were preparing to receive the onset; and Elim, placing himself at the head of a body of well-armed gallóglaachs, ran down the crags in the direction of the temple (the place of Eithne's confinement), turning at intervals and waving his sword by way of summons to his followers. They were met on the borders of the stream by the Bay-kings, whose habitual readiness for action rendered no more time necessary to transport them from their revels to the field. Before a blow was struck, Elim despatched a messenger to O'Driscoll, to inform him that he might direct his assault with more advantage on the Dun, where, as the deserters had let him know, Inguar and Tuathal were stationed with the native troops. When both parties came in sight, the Ithians slackened their speed, in order to advance in better order, and gazed with wondering eyes on the immoveable and well-armed force who stood awaiting them on the further side of the river. The wood of gleaming battle-axes, where scarce a movement was visible except the fluttering of the Reafan standard in the gentle morning wind, the gigantic persons of the northmen, and the steady discipline with which they seemed to await the charge, seemed to strike the native forces with astonishment and awe. Presently, as was their custom, the scalds of the northmen raised a hymn to Odin, in which, soon after, the whole army joined. The Ithians descended to the onset with shouts of defiance, while their minstrels played the most inspiring strains, and the Rosg-catha,* or Battle-song, was chaunted by the poet of the sept.

In their attempt to ford the stream, the Ithians were repulsed with dreadful slaughter. They did not, however,

* See Note 56. The Rosg-catha.

lose courage, but returned to the charge with vigour, and after much effort succeeded in dislodging a portion of the foreign force. This slight advantage was followed up so strenuously that the bank would have been gained in a short time, but for a reinforcement, consisting of Baseg and his adventurers, with a large body of allied tribes. The Ithians were wholly unable to resist this new accession of force, and, after suffering severely, gave way, and fighting step by step (till the stream was dyed with blood), retired to the bank from which they had set out, and along the rocks in the direction of those cliffs which overlooked the Dun. On the crags the Ithians again had the advantage of ground, and their chieftain was urging them by voice and gesture to another onset, when, bursting through the crowd of mountain warriors who stood before him, he beheld the huge and mailed figure of the infamous mover of the war—his rival and the murderer, Baseg.

"Hold back," cried Baseg to his troops, as they were passing forward; "back, on your lives! This prey is mine alone!"

Around the persons of the rival chieftains the inferior warriors stopped short, as if by mutual consent, and lowered their weapons, while Elim and the long-exiled thannist perused each other's person with the intensest curiosity.

"Thou art but a stripling," said Baseg, resting his ponderous sword-blade on the open palm of his left hand, while he surveyed, with a grim smile, the slender frame of the Ithian, "but thou hast the air, the shape of him to whom I owe the first poison-draught that made my life healthless."

"And thou," said Elim, "thou fittest the horrid tale that, even in childhood, I have heard of thee with shuddering and with abhorrence. I knew thee even before I heard thy voice. I know the purchaser of Eimhir's skill and Conall's blood."

"Stand to thy weapon then," said Baseg furiously, "for our acquaintance shall be brief and bloody."

So saying, he addressed himself to combat, while Elim, fixing his eye steadily on his assailant, received him with the coolness that was habitual to his character. They were not, however, long permitted to maintain the contest single-handed. A sudden onset from the northmen forced the Ithians from their ground, and, by ill-fortune, separated Elim from the main body of his troops. A few close followers only remained beside him, all of whom he had the grief to see perish one by one beneath the battle-axes of the sea-kings. Still parrying with unabated vigour the blows of the revengeful Baseg, and seeing it impossible to rejoin his friends, he retreated step by step towards the brow of the cliff which overlooked the Dun, and reached the rock from which Duach had cast himself two days earlier; at the moment when the raven standard vanished from the Dun, and amid tremendous shouts of triumph, the banner of O'Driscoll was planted in its place. Here Elim, finding himself alone, and pressed by a host of foes, whose battle-axes had already hacked his shield, gave up the useless contest, and dived, accoutred as he was, down the dizzy height, and into the deep basin of the widening stream beneath.

A cry of dismay burst from those of his own sept who witnessed his disaster from the height, but their fears were allayed when they beheld him emerging from the tranquil waters, and, still keeping his shield upon his arm, pursue his way, with vigorous strokes, to the opposite shore, amid a shower of javelins, arrows, and battle-axes, from the disappointed northmen. Their exultation was complete when they saw him received on the other side by a party of the troops from Cleir, at whose head he was soon seen hurrying to the captured Dun.

"To the temple," cried Baseg, hastily re-ascending the crags; "that villain Inguar has betrayed his post! The

coward! See the coward where he flies across the ford! To the temple! Though he has escaped my weapon, I know where I can cut him deeper yet."

In the mean while, Elim joined O'Driscoll at the Dun, where Inguar had set the first example of dismay. He beheld the latter crossing the bridge, amid showers of brazen balls and darts, not only from the enemy but from his own indignant friends, the northmen, who had been left to aid him in preserving this stronghold, and with whom, as courage was the deifying virtue, so cowardice was the last of vices. He entered the copse by which Duach had effected his escape and was not again seen in the valley.

Elim delayed in the Dun only to receive from the Sior Lamh, who laughed heartily at his dripping plight, a body of forces strong enough to enable him to attack with success the troops by which the temple was protected.

"Take with thee the marc-sluagh and gallóglach," said O'Driscoll, "and make as clean a piece of work as we have of the Dan. Away, for I see these northmen hurrying along the crags, and the Ithians press them hard upon the rear."

Elim, without making any reply, vaulted on the back of the horse which was presented to him, and, at the head of a large body of heavily armed cavalry, galloped along the river side in the direction of the temple, while the gallóglach followed with such speed as their inferior equipment might allow.

CHAPTER LXXXI.

THE alarm had spread through the valley on the preceding evening, and though the festival had not been interrupted, precautions were taken by the chiefs to prevent a surprise on the following morn. Eithne was still confined in her small chamber, when the bustling of arms around the temple, and the shouts which resounded all over the Coom and the surrounding mountains, excited at once her hope and her anxiety. At the moment when Elim and his troop were departing from the Dun, Baseg had already penetrated the temple, and commanding his followers to remain without, burst alone into the chamber of the Ard-Drai's niece.

Eithne, who read her fate in his countenance, shrieked aloud when she beheld him, and cast herself at his feet. The ruffian stooped, but only to entwine his fingers in her long tresses, by which he half dragged, half led her, to the front of the iron altar.

"I entreat of thee," she cried, at length, looking up with a piteous expression, as he paused a moment to list to the sounds of conflict which had already commenced without—"by thy manhood, and by thy memory of him who once was chieftain in this vale, to spare my life. I am defenceless and a woman."

"Swear to me," said the thanist, seeming to relent—"swear that thou ne'er wilt wed that vile usurper, and take thy wretched life, which I have no desire to rob thee of. Thou wilt not speak?" he added, observing Eithne pause, "then die and—ha! ingrate! serpent! art thou there?"

Eithne, with astonishment, beheld him, on a sudden, fix his eyes on some object behind her, and remain as if immoveable. Following his glance with her own, she sud-

denly disengaged herself with a violent effort from his grasp, and sprung to the stranger's feet.

It was the Northumbrian, who, aware of Eithne's danger, had sought the temple alone, and owing to the ignorance of the guards, who esteemed him still a friend, obtained admission to the apartment of the prophetess, and thence to the body of the temple. The thanist, directing his rage into a new channel, was about to wreak on the Northumbrian the vengeance which he had dared to cross, when the gate of the building was burst open, and the Ithians pouring in, compelled him to defend his own life instead of molesting others. He died, fighting with the obstinacy of a bull-dog, at the foot of the iron altar; while Kenric, conveying Eithne from the scene of conflict, assisted in restoring her to consciousness. Having seen her safely placed in the arms of her betrothed lord, he hastened from the captured pile—nor was he seen again in the valley, notwithstanding all the efforts made by Elim for his discovery. In the mean time, Duach, severing, with one sweep of his skene, the head of the discomfited thanist, placed it upon a spear, and, mounting his horse, rode off in savage triumph to Rath-Aedain, where he gave Macha a sounding narrative of what had taken place, comparing Elim to Finn MacCumhaill, and himself to the great Conn Crethir, of Lougheryar, and averring that such a contest had never been witnessed since the Monarch of the World came to conquer Ireland, “when the engagement was such that all the country echoed from their tremendous blows; the sea seemed to roar and swell; the earth to shake; the sun, moon, and celestial planets, to alter their courses and natural motions; and even the unwieldy monsters of the deep to forsake the profound caverns of the ocean and crowd into the harbour, being as much frightened as if all these supernatural and terrible concussions intended immediate dissolution”

The sun that rose that morn upon the valley of the

Druids, gave light to scenes of a nature too frequent in the history of Inisfail to make their detailed description either new or pleasing. War mingled fiercely in the parting festival, and raged throughout the morn and till the afternoon. The fall of even beheld the remnant of the Loch Lannachs flying with their shattered raven through the defiles leading towards Ross Ailithir, while the native forces still maintained a hopeless struggle among the fastnesses which bounded in the fertile Coom.

A few of the northern leaders who had longest maintained possession of the disputed temple, perceiving that it was likely to be wrested from their hands by Elim and the troops of Cleir, gave up the whole for lost, and were amongst the first to leave the valley. O'Driscoll, who judged that such would be the policy of the Vikingr, in case of defeat, was not without providing for their interception. They were almost all destroyed in the passes, and their ships were fired in the bay.

Towards evening, Inguar entered, almost alone, the rocky pass by which Elim had first approached the valley. As he hurried up the crags, a groan, as of one in pain, struck on his ear, to which, nevertheless, he would have paid little heed, if it had not been followed by the sound of a familiar voice. He looked around, and beheld, lying transversely in the bed of a small torrent almost dry, the figure of a man, of middle age, who supported his head with difficulty against the rock, and strove to diminish, with one hand pressed against his side, the flow of blood, from a deep and painful wound. It was the Dane who had been Kenric's guard in the peillice where he had been placed by the Swede.

"Inguar," said the dying man, in a voice of faint upbraiding, "wilt thou pass thy foster brother, while the shades of Hella gather on his eyes?"

"Ferreis wounded!" cried the Swede.

"And very like to die," replied the Dane; "but what

is that? Behold Destroyer broken!" he continued, holding up the shattered blade of his small crooked sword. "See Dazzler's glory all departed, Inguar; no matter—thou art witness to my guild, I kept the hilt still fast in spite of them."

"Poor wretch!" said Inguar, "thou art perishing."

"I could have wished to fall in a cleaner spot," said the Dane, "but the parti-coloured queen strikes where she pleases. That breeder of this turmoil, Baseg, fought for me till I got this gash in the side, and the Ithians made him look for safety for himself. Oh, Yrling, I am coming to thee, Yrling. Good friend," he added, looking in the face of Inguar, "if thou shouldst bury me, make them cleanse my garments, wash all this ugly gore from my hair, and let my cloak be——"

"Night!" exclaimed Inguar, as he saw the wounded man fall back and die in the effort of speech. The sounds of triumph at a startling proximity warned him to be gone, and he departed, leaving the unfortunate Dane in the place where he had found him.

Deprived of the assistance on which they relied so much, the native troops were not able to maintain a lengthened struggle with their foes. The vale, though long and obstinately contested after the death of Baseg, was in the hands of Elim before evening, and the sight of the standard of the Ithians upon the dwelling of the chief, soon quelled the ardour of resistance in the breasts of his dependents. The forces which had joined the enterprise from other Druid holds, dispersed to their several territories, and, ere midnight, the after-battle stillness had sunk down upon the ravaged Coom. Still the broad light of the rush torches showed that the inmates of the captured Dun were active. Still through the death-like silence, a distant shout from the pursuers—the voices of watchers in the valley, and the hasty galloping of a single horseman, came with a lonesome influence on Kenric's

ear, as he turned from the mountain heights to look back upon the valley. Still, along the river side, the burning embers of the ruined cottages revealed the wasting work which war had done, and night would hide, but could not.

"Short-lived ambition!" said Kenric, as he gazed upon the altered scene, and flung down into the deep ravine beneath him the spear and scian which he no longer needed, "that folly of a day is dearly purchased. O Inguar, the promiser! the promiser! Thy promises are over now at last. O lonely Coom, I brought little with me when I sought thee last, and now I leave thee utterly bereft, for all is gone. I gave up all on yesterday. Grim Baseg, where are now thy bright assurances?"

Hurrying from these thoughts, no less than from the dangers of the place, the wretched apostate hied from the scene of carnage, without considering to what point he should direct his steps for safety. In the Coom, after every effort had been made to find him, he was at length given up for one of those who had perished in the river. The body of the unhappy Ard-Drai, Tuathal, was found upon the very threshold of the Dun, at no great distance from that of the haughty Eiré, whose neck a shaft had pierced, while she was employed in urging on the warriors to resistance.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

THE summer months had rolled away before all traces of this dreadful day had vanished from the bosom of the vale. Eithne, without dispute, was vested with the possessions Tuathal had abused so vilely, while the title and

power passed to a distant branch of the sept. The influence of Elim and O'Driscoll obtained an easy peace for its inhabitants. An intercourse, more constant than before, was sustained from henceforth between them and the people of Rath-Aedain. A species of traffic in corn, forest skins, and other commodities, was established with Ross Ailithir, and other towns and brughs along the coast, and Eithne had the satisfaction of seeing the indolent and savage habits which characterized her tribe, give place to a spirit of peaceful industry. Abundance blessed, at first, the wild retreat, and beauty graced it as before. The intercourse spread wider with the neighbouring townships, and the valley promised soon to be as flourishing as it was lovely.

With the return of autumn, in the following year, the preparations were made for celebrating, at Dun Druadh, the nuptials of the Ithian chief and the Ard-Drai's niece, The news of this event reached Kenric's ears as he was teaching in the famous school of Dioma,* where he had found an asylum from all but his own memory. A prey, to the last, to the unhappy foible of his character, he could not endure the idea of presenting himself before Elim, after the humiliating avowal of his baseness. He had chosen Cill Dioma for a residence, because it was not far from Deochain Neassan; and, though he dared not now return to the city of letters, he felt as if the air of the place might do him good. The account of Elim's approaching nuptials reached him, as he sat on the very spot where, shortly after his first arrival, in boyhood, at the college of Muingharid, he had been defended by the latter against the jests of their two schoolfellows.

The contrast in their fortunes, now deeper than it had ever been before, made him more disturbed at this intelligence than formerly, when the news of Elim's happiness

* Kildimo.

had often reached him in his hours of self-incurred dejection.

He brooded indolently over these thoughts throughout the day. In the evening he went out to seek some amusement at a coshering in the neighbourhood. Far, however, from diverting his mind from the prevailing passion, the mirth of this assembly deepened its hold upon him. The music had the sound of bridal music, the dancers timed it with the air of Eithne, and those who drank seemed drinking to the happiness of Elim. The messenger who had brought him the intelligence was Moyel, who was bound on some affairs of traffic to the City of Ships. He had seen Kenric accidentally at the place already mentioned, and had promised to call at Cill Dioma, on his return. Before he fulfilled his pledge, however, the scholar had formed, in the course of the night, the determination to leave at once a land which had been to him the scene of so much suffering.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

ON the evening which was intended to precede the bridal, Macha was seated with her son on a bank near the little bridge which crossed the river that flowed round Dun Druadh. They were conversing quietly of the approaching event, while the charm of a calm autumnal afternoon gave a delicious interest to the scene which lay before them. Far down the valley, now rich with ripened corn-fields, and other tillage, some groups of the earlier invited guests, among whom was the young prince Artrigh, were seen loitering along the river side, pausing and turning, from time to time, as some oratorical individual extended his arm, directing their attention to some particular improvements in the landscape. The yellow sunshine lay

steady on the luxuriant picture; the wood-larks surged in flocks among the oaks on the hill-side; the water ouzel dived into the stony current which flowed by the Dun; in the deeper basins of which the gambols of the trout made frequent circles.

"It is a delicious season," said Macha, after they had sat some time in silence, "as fair as the promise of thine own fortunes, Elim."

"And yet," said the Itbian, "amid all this sweetness and serenity, there is something to remind us of its opposite."

So saying, he pointed upward, to a bird which floated far above their heads upon the sunny air. It was one of those falcons which built their aeries in the clefts of Coolum, and seemed to hover, like something evil, above this scene of natural peace and joy.

The preparations for the ceremony of the following day commenced in such a manner as became an union by which the interests of two considerable septs were to be closely blended. The Dun was adorned with garlands of orphine and wild roses, and the wooden bridge concealed with closely-woven wreaths of the doubled-flowered water avens, the sweet-scented creeping camomile, and the little sunflower. Parties of the wealthier members of both families were seen grouped about the Dun, or loitering in the soft twilight along the river side. The bright green caps and many-coloured cloaks of the male, and the large rich veils and snow white garments of the female guests, gave a gay and brilliant air to the rich autumnal scene. On either side the river, as far as the eye could reach along the Coom, multitudes of the kerne and humble husbandmen, arriving party after party, were gathered in larger companies, in cloaks of the arbutus dye, and the dark purple canabhas—the women with kerchiefs folded modestly around their heads, the men with their hoods thrown back, and suffering the mass of curls which formed the coolun to appear. Some danced to the sound of the harp

or piob-mala; while others sat listening to the song of the filea, or the imaginative story of the dresbdeartach.*

On the small green spot which lay between the entrance of the Dun and the bridge by which it was connected with the valley, appeared the individuals whose fortunes formed the subject of interest to the whole of the assembled multitude. Macha, her sister Melcha, and O'Driscoll, slowly walked apart; the matron figure of the former, wrapped in a deep blue mantle, with a silken kerchief wound around her head. Eithne, who sat on a flower-woven bench, near the entrance of the Dun, between Elim and her brother, was dressed in a plain white robe, with a golden bodkin fastening up her hair, and another binding an ample veil of the whitest silk, which went scarfwise round the shoulders, and was secured upon the waist. Elim, who sat beside her was attired in a dress † that, in the eyes of many who beheld him, was admirably suited to the expression of his countenance and figure. A close-fitting triubhis or saffron hose, and sandals of the most graceful form, a tunic of flesh-coloured silk, and a cloak of azure dye, made fast upon the shoulder with a fibula of gold, harmonized with his clear and open countenance, the calm serenity of his unchanging manner, and the light, fair mass of curls that floated in the national fashion down his neck. Two pearls, the purest that had ever left Loch Lene, hung gracefully behind (not from) his ears, and marked the wearer's rank, while they adorned his person. Not the least interesting figures in the group were those of the aged Ceannfinny and his partner, who had lived to witness the wedding of their grand-child, surrounded by a numerous group of happy offspring. And not the least remarkable were those of the physician Finngáin and his three immortal daltadhs, who sat, solemn as night, in the shadow formed by the projecting roof of the Dun.

* See Note 22.

† See Note 5.

Along the Coom, in various places, large furnaces of the losa wood were piled together, great copper cauldrons were suspended over the blaze, and griddles laid upon the broken embers, at which the numerous cooks were busy in preparing fish and meat in various ways, and making all necessary provision for an abundant festival; while numbers of women were seen, some turning the quern with all their might, others gathering the wheaten flour as fast as it was formed, and kneading it into cakes, which were baked as rapidly as they were made. Lest any deficiency should occur, a number of men, who were relieved at intervals by fresh parties from the crowd, were seen reaping in the neighbouring corn-fields, so that many consumed at night the grain which, a few hours before, had been receiving the last maturing glow from the declining sun. On the plain, along the river, three-legged tables were placed for the wealthier sort, while beds of grass, or rushes, laid in rings, formed the accommodation of the lowest classes. The music* of the trompa, and tinkling crotal, the tiompân, the brassy crotalin, the corabas,* the wild oirpbeam,* and other instruments, was heard at intervals in various parts of the valley. After having long enjoyed the scene, in silent delight, from their elevated seat beside the entrance, Melcha could not avoid directing the attention of her companions to its tranquil beauty.

"Yes," said Macha, "it is beautiful, but Elim's eye is not upon the Coom."

"It is not," answered Elim, "and yet I have been looking on it long, and admiring it too. But seest thou, Macha, upon the point of that distant crag, where a single streak of sunshine yet is resting, a solitary figure, standing upright, and gazing down upon the scene of joy? How lonely is the effect of that figure, far apart, and

* See Note 2.

separated from the festival! How dark it looks in the little gleam of sunshine! How far its shadow falls across the rocks!"

"I see the person thou meanest," answered Eithne. "The distance is great, and yet I can see he does not wear the dress of either sept."

"Why does he not descend and share the feast?" continued Elim, still gazing towards the motionless figure on the distant crag—"some forlorn soul, perhaps, that cannot open to the tide of joy; perhaps the only heart in all the multitude that will to-night give woe or pain a welcome. I wish he would come down and join the dancers."

"He seems as if he understood thy wishes," said Macha, "for he is already beginning to descend. But, hark! the buabhal sounds for the hour of refreshment in the valley, and Geide and Fiachadh come to announce to us that our own banquet is ready in the Dun."

A choir of wind music, consisting of cornbeans, readans, conches, and other instruments then in use, broke suddenly upon their hearing, and presently the guests of nobler rank, who were to join the party of the bridegroom, began to cross the bridge in graceful order. The banners of both septs, placed in the ground, on either side of the entrance, were wreathed into a kind of arch with bands of flowers, under which they passed into the dwelling. Here several tables were displayed with various kinds of food, the produce of fishing and the chase, as much as of domestic husbandry. Numbers of attendants, attired in hose and tunics of the shamrock green, supplied the guests with mead, and other kinds of drink, in cups of wood, of horn, of brass, or silver, according to the rank of those they served. The night had now completely fallen, and the natural light was supplied by the rushen torches; two of which, twisted to the thickness of a man's arm, were placed near the open entrance, while another of enormous

magnitude, burned like a furnace in that part of the building which, in the colder seasons, was cheered with lighted fuel, and where Elim, now so many years ago, had seen, for the first time, the old Ard-Drai, and his blooming niece. The feast was followed by the song and dance, and the evening passed in still increasing merriment.

At midnight, after the guests had wearied themselves with mirth, the loud, though deep-toned sound of the buabhal, from a neighbouring height, announced, at the same time, a change in the moon's quarters, and the hour at which the festivities of the evening were to terminate. The company separated to find repose for some few hours in the surrounding peillices, or under tents erected for the occasion. At sunrise it was intended that the bride and bridegroom should be accompanied by both septs, in orderly procession, to the edifice where Baseg once performed his gloomy rites, but where the gods of Baseg dwelt no more.

Wearied by the unusual dissipation of the evening, and longing for a quiet hour of meditation, which might restore her mind to its usual tone of peace, Eithne beheld with pleasure the last of the long train of guests departing from the Dun, in which there only now remained the attendants, busy in arranging whatever the evening festival had left in disorder, extinguishing the torches, and assisting the cruitires to put up their silent instruments of music. After a little time, spent in tranquil conversation with her friends, and bidding them an affectionate good-night, she retired with Macha through a curtained recess which led to her own apartment.

Soon after, and with little previous conversation, the daughter of the Ard-Drai bade Macha, too, farewell, embraced, and parted from her. A deep and serious mood of anxious thought oppressed her spirits on a sudden, and made her long for perfect solitude. The buabhal had

spoke truly in announcing the approach of the full-moon, for her light fell now, all yellow with the harvest tinge, upon the floor and yew-built walls of Eithne's chamber. The lonely sounds of the attendants' voices, calling to each other through the now deserted dwelling, the echoing of footsteps in the outer chambers, and other similar sounds, at once disturbed the train of Eithne's thoughts, and deepened the feeling of natural loneliness which she was endeavouring to subdue. She thought of the Ard-Drai's lonely cairn, of the days of her childhood, and, at length, of Kenric, the Northumbrian scholar.

A wicket, leading to the garden which bordered on one branch of the divided river, formed a kind of postern to the Dun, and was connected by a short passage with the apartment of Eithne. Still touched with compassion at the fate of the unhappy Anglo-Saxon, she left her chamber, in order to think awhile at leisure in the open air. As she opened the small wicket, the sweet night wind came gratefully around her, and a moonlight landscape broke upon her view, where every object, flower, tree, shrub, or river, was shown with a distinctness clear as that of morn.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

THE figure which Elim had discerned at sunset, on the distant crags which bounded in the Coom, was that of the unhappy son of Ailred. Not having to encounter on his journey, the many delays which had retarded that of Moyel, the evening of the day which brought the former to the valley, saw Kenric also toiling up the heights that formed the natural wall of the retreat. Weary of his journey, and of the reflections which had haunted it incessantly, he reached the craggy summit in a disposition

little suited to the character of joy and festive ease which brightened the face of the Coom. He paused, in troubled wonder, on the rocks, to look upon the change which had been wrought since last he turned to look upon the valley. How different was this scene of prosperous industry and of cheerfulness, from that deep gloomy picture of desolation which he had left behind him on the night of the defeat of the Vikings. He shuddered as he thought upon the days which had preceded that disastrous struggle—a day of which he had never dared to speak, and strove, though all in vain, to banish from his memory. He knew not what he should do now for peace. Returning to Northumbria he had fixed upon; and haply there, he thought that years of patient suffering and retirement might do—he knew not what; he feared to hope; he feared despair still more; he only knew that he was all a chaos; and parting with his friends at Inisfail, and seeking once again his father's home, were all that lay before his mind distinctly.

The sound of mirthful music from the valley, for the moment, checked the train of his reflections. He had forgot that it was Elim's wedding day. How happy was the scene! how cheerful was the aspect of the assembly! It was like all the unclouded life of Elim, so free from care and from solicitude, so widely different from his own. He arose from the earth, and remained for some time without moving, thinking of this, and listening to the music. Alarmed, at length, at the continual recurrence of these painful feelings, he hastened down into the vale, resolving to despatch, without delay, the parting interview he came to seek, and then to place himself beyond the reach of any danger which they could occasion.

He remained amongst the guests on the river-side, mingling, though without sympathy, in their mirth, until the broad and beamless harvest-moon rose, like a sanguine shield, upon the Coom. Undecided as to the man-

ner in which he should seek admission at the Dun, he wandered along the river, until the sound of the buabhal announced the hour of separation to all the guests. He crossed the bridge before the lights were extinguished in the Dun, but refrained from entering the dwelling, as he had designed, and turned aside to collect his thoughts, for a time, on the shore of the little isle.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

NEAR the pebbly margin of the little river, where it broke, with a shallow murmur, over uneven beds of limestone, a kind of grotto had been formed by Eithne, in her leisure hours, while yet the Ard-Drai was living in Dun Druadh. The interior, all the work of her own hands, she had fashioned like an altar-piece, and adorned with minerals, the natural product of her native kingdom of Muimhean. The glittering rock crystals of Ciar, the star-stone of Gleann Maghair,* the amethyst, rent from the cliffs that bordered on the mouth of the Sionann, and lucid pebbles of different brilliant hues, found in the streams and quarries of the Coom, gleamed from the walls and ceiling of the recess. The floor was formed of the variegated marble of Ceann Mara,† and two huge stalactites, brought from the caves of Ovens, and measuring several feet in height, were placed, like shafts, on either side the entrance. The waters bubbled within a single pace of the retreat, leaving free a space sufficient only for the approach.

Here, seated on a bench in perfect solitude, while the Ard-Drai's daughter meditated on the events which had

* Glanmire, near Cork.

† Kenmare.

gone by, and which she yet expected, the shadow of a human figure fell upon the marble floor on which her eyes were fixed. She suddenly looked up, and beheld, standing in the moonlight, between her and the river, the wild and altered form of Kenric, the Northumbrian.

"Eithne," he said, "what, Eithne, is it thou?"

The surprise of Eithne left her for some moments unable to reply.

"How fortunate it is," continued Kenric, "that I should thus have found thee here alone. I was about returning to Northumbria, and I could not bid farewell, a last farewell to Inisfail, without saying a parting word to my quick pupil."

"And to thy friend?" said Eithne, timidly.

"My friend? What Elim? Ah, may he forget me. He's happy enough, quite happy enough without me. Talk not of Elim now; he's happy enough. What sayest thou, Eithne? Are the stars forgot? Where moves the wain? Where weep the Pleiades? Does Venus ever smile upon the Coom? That Mars has lighted it at times I know. Is all forgotten Eithne, in the heavens?"

"Not all," said Eithne, still not quite at ease.

"I am glad of that," said Kenric, hastily, and with a somewhat wild air. "It would be strange if it were otherwise, for—for—thou hadst a quick and retentive memory. I never was, myself, more apt in that respect; and that, if one might say it, without boasting, would be considered no light praise by many."

"I am very sure of it," said Eithne, in a soothing tone, and with a feeling of anxiety, which was rather increased than diminished by the tone of Kenric's conversation.

"Concerning Elim—hark! what sound is that?" he added, starting, and trembling violently.

"The voice of some one calling from the vale," said Eithne. "There are guards around us."

"How much it startled me!" said Kenric, still all

trembling; "one would think I was afraid of something, Eithne. I am greatly altered, too, in this respect. There was a time when fear, except the best, was utterly a stranger to my nature. But it is not the only ugly guest that has of late days forced itself upon me." He paused a moment, and then, taking from his tunic a small volume, and gazing on it long, with a mournful smile, he placed it in the hand of Eithne. "Keep this," he said, "in memory of Rath-Aedain. It has some merit, for it once amused thee. Preserve it, Eithne, and whenever thou lookest, on a cloudless night, upon the stars, thou wilt think of me, wilt thou not?" Eithne received the book without reply, and at the same instant, with a low and mournful "farewell," which she had not even time to return, the Northumbrian disappeared.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

LET us follow Kenric to his lonely dwelling at Cill Dioma. As evening fell, his torments grew almost intolerable, and he hurried out of the house in order to try whether action might relieve them. He took what used to be his favorite course, the road which led to Deochain Neassan. He was walking rapidly along, when a brother of the convent, one of those with whom, during his last residence in Deochain Neassan, he had been most intimate, suddenly accosted him.

"Kenric!" exclaimed the religious, "is it possible thou art returned at length?"

"I am glad to see thee," answered Kenric.

"Where hast thou been? what sudden accident occasioned thy departure? The regent was afflicted at thy absence."

"He had reason," answered the scholar in a low voice.

"Thou art strangely altered," continued the religious; "hast thou been ill?"

"A little," answered Kenric.

"Come with me to the convent," said the monk. "It is near the hour of evening service, and I cannot stay now to question, or to answer thee, but come to me at sunset, and I will tell thee what has happened in thine absence. Hark! there—the bell is tolling—fail not to come."

"Thou art happy!" answered Kenric, "thou art very happy; thou art very peaceful."

The monk gazed on him, at a loss to know what he meant.

"Thou art happy," continued Kenric, "but I am wretched, very wretched. I am not ill in frame, as thou supposest, but miserable in mind. Oh, could I but unload my heart to thee, could I but hope that thou wouldst hear me patiently, could I but hope thy good, thy holy counsel, for never, never was the voice of charity more needful to a miserable ear."

The religious seemed affected.

"Whatever change" said he, "of blame or of distress, thy words denote, thou knowest that thou art certain of my assistance. Fail not to come to me at sunset."

Kenric remained, for a longer time than he imagined, gazing on the earth, with something like a gleam of hope just breaking on the darkness of his mind. At length he said, in a soft low tone, that wore the accent of returning peace:

"I will not fail. It may be good for me."

There was no reply, and Kenric, looking up, received a shock that thrilled through all his nerves—the monk had disappeared, and Inguar was standing in his place.

It were needless to detail the scene of miserable re-

crimination which took place on their re-union, between those two acquaintances in evil. It was ended by Inguar, who pointed to a carbud, in the road beside them, to which were harnessed a pair of light steeds.

"Where wouldst thou fly?" asked Kenric, anxiously, and with a wavering look.

"To Inismore," replied the Scandinavian. "Could we but reach Port Láirge without detection, I could be certain of our passage thence."

The prospect of a speedy return to his native shore, the hope of flying from a land where now the very face of cheerful nature was changed, for him, to menace and gloom, where even the winds, the hills, the trees, the streams, were all remembrancers of dreadful hours, made Kenric waver about his appointment with the religious. The temporary relief from pain, which the remembrance of home occasioned in his mind, contributed to change his resolution. Besides, he could do nothing here that might not be as well done in Northumberland, and more securely. The instances of Inguar decided him, and he took his seat beside him in the carbud. The vehicle was hurried rapidly away, the vigorous horses charging, with their laborious steam, the calm autumnal air, while Kenric, leaning backward from his seat, gazed long upon the receding scenes that had been so dear to his childhood—so eventful to his maturer years; and listened, with a farewell sorrow, to those eternal harmonies that soon, to him, died faintly away for ever in the vault of distance.

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

THEIR journey was interrupted by an unexpected incident. It may be remembered that, since the decisive day

of Coom-nan-Druadh, nothing farther has been related of the fate of Gurmund and the remaining troops of the Vikingr. Compelled to retreat by the cowardly desertion of Inguar, they had, in conjunction with a party of the worsted natives, effected their escape from the scene of contest, and found refuge among the fastnesses of the mountain land which bordered on Fearamuighe.* The second evening of their flight beheld them established, within an earthen fort, in a lonesome district, difficult of access, where they maintained themselves, during a long period, by nightly plunder in the surrounding valleys.

The fortitude with which these gloomy sons of rapine supported their adversity, was not equal to the ferocious energy which they manifested in their expeditions. On the first night of their encampment in the Rath, a dark desponding spirit brooded over them, and their demeanour was as gloomy as the solitudes in which they mustered their small force. Some sat in sullen silence on the earth; some slept beneath their huge, round skiolds; while others, of a more impatient temper, spared not to rail against the power of Odin, shot arrows, in defiance against the stars, and scoffed at their deity and his blustering attributes. In the morning, however, when their chieftain pointed out to them the means of procuring all that was needful for their present use, and afforded them the means of continuing their zeal for depredation with impunity, they grew more reconciled to their reverse.

On the third night of the journey of the two fugitives, for they rested not an hour on the way, it happened that their carbud drove in the moonlight, by the mountains of Fearamuighe Fene. The midnight found them in a lonesome district, with a mountain, severed by two great defiles, on one hand, and a wide and dreary heath upon the other. During the preceding afternoon, the anxieties of

* Fermoy.

Inguar, which continued increasing since they had left Muingharid, began perceptibly to diminish. They had now nearly passed the frontiers of the hostile territory, and hoped, on the ensuing day, to reach the harbour from which they were to take shipping.

While Inguar was expressing his satisfaction at the good success which had hitherto attended them, the Northumbrian directed his attention to the glimmering of weapons from the defile which they were about to pass. The sight appeared to chill the soul of the Swede, and he suffered the rein to slacken on the necks of the flying steeds.

"We are lost!" he murmured, "they have intercepted us."

"Why dost thou slack the rein?" said the Northumbrian. "Haste rather—and redouble thy despatch."

"It would but quicken our destruction," answered Inguar, in violent agitation, "they would send their deadly missiles after us. Is there no way? no turning?" he added, looking behind, and on both sides, with a miserable eye.

"It is too late to fly," said Kenric. "Drive through, it is our only chance. Hold! hold! We are safe, they are the weapons of the Vikingr!"

"The Vikingr?" cried Inguar with redoubled terror.

"The same," cried Kenric, seizing the reins with one hand, "and I have a dull recollection if that be not the ponderous club of Gurmund."

"Let go the reins!" cried Inguar; but the Northumbrian had scarcely time to comply with his request, when they found themselves in the midst of the northerns.

They were recognised at once by several of the Vikingr, and Gurmund, accosting them with coldness, bade Inguar to alight.

"Thou art welcome to us," he said, with a smile, "I have been longing for thee ever since we parted at the

Coom. For thee, Northumbrian," he continued, addressing Kenric, while Inguar, trembling, descended from the vehicle, "remain in the car, and take what course thou wilt. 'The hurdle is for the coward only.'"

The wretched Inguar uttered a horrid cry, that rent the soul of Kenric with a strange sensation of disgust and pain. He clung to the side of the carbud, from which, however, he was quickly dragged by the command of Gurmund, who, at the same time, pricked the steeds with his many-pointed club, and sent them galloping forward at a speed which Kenric's utmost efforts could not make them slacken. Meantime the hoarse cries of "the hurdle for the coward, quick! the hurdle!" together with the despairing yells of Inguar, were mingled fearfully with the rolling of the carbud wheels, and the trampling of the affrighted horses.

"My life! my life! oh, spare my life!" he heard the miserable wretch exclaim; "torture me, flay me, give me the lash, the fire, but spare my life! Life! life! do anything but take my life!"

His horrid cries were drowned in the noise of the vehicle. When Kenric was able to rein in the horses, he turned to listen, but all was dead silence behind him, and the figures, dimly seen in the moonlight, of some warriors who were trampling on the fatal hurdle, showed him in what way Inguar's shrieks had been suppressed.

Of Gurmund himself, it was afterwards ascertained that he had perished by the gory ox-yoke of the Runner of Odin, as an offering to propitiate the angry deities in the distress of his followers, at a time when, seizing on the barks of some native fishermen, they put to sea, once more, in search of safety.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

Let us leave the unhappy scholar to pursue his journey alone along the dreary road, and return to some persons, concerning whose fortunes our narrative has long been silent.

The aged Vuscfreæa was seated, at nightfall, by his hearth, and listening to the tales of Webba, whose voyage to Inisfail had supplied him with abundant matter for the entertainment of his master's leisure hours.

"Webba," said the old man, "lay aside thy stories for a while, and fetch thy little horse-hair foolery, and let me hear that song thou learnedest from the old minstrel who met thee on the highway near the City of the Ford of Hurdles."

Webba went for his harp, and complied with his master's wish.

THE SONG OF THE OLD MENDICANT.

I.

A man of threescore, with the snow on his brow,
And the light in his aged eye dim,
O valley of sorrow ! what lure hast thou now,
In thy changes of promise for him ?
Gay nature may smile, but his sight is grown old,
Joy sound, but his hearing is dull !
And pleasure may feign, but his bosom is cold,
And the cup of his weariness full.

II.

Once, warm with the pulses of young twenty-three
With plenty and ease in my train,
Thy fair visions wore an enchantment for me,
That never can gild them again.

For changed are my fortunes, and early and late
From dwelling to dwelling I go ;
And I knock with my staff at our first mother's gate,
And I ask for a lodging below.*

III.

Farewell to thee, Time ! in thy passage with me,
One truth thou hast taught me to know,
Though lovely the past and the future may be,
The present is little but woe.
For the sum of those joys that we find in life's way,
Where thy silent wing still wafts us on,
Is a hope for to-morrow—a want for to-day,
And a sigh for the times that are gone.

The song had not long been concluded, when a low voice was heard at the window, exclaiming, in accents of penetrating entreaty,

“Uncle ! Vuscfraea !”

“Hark !” cried the old man, “Webba, what was that ?”

“It is the voice of Kenric, or his ghost,” cried Webba, changing colour rapidly, “Perchance he has had the grace to follow me at length.”

“Lay aside thy instrument,” cried Vuscfraea, “and open the door, whoever he be that knocks. It is now four years since he left this dwelling to seek his fortune in East-Anglia.”

The door was opened, and Vuscfraea, had little difficulty in recognizing, all worn and altered as they were, the features of Domnona's wretched son. He had travelled, almost without rest or food, from the sea-side; and now, before any greeting could pass between him and his aged relative, he sunk upon the floor, from which so many years before he had started on his brief career—a miserable wreck, the victim of self-will and wretched pride.

* This beautiful sentiment occurs in Chaucer.

They bore him to a sleeping room, and laid him on one of those narrow couches which were used at the period. Assistance, however, came too late to save him from the effects of extreme exhaustion, both of mind and frame. A species of delirium, of the most melancholy kind, partaking much more of the character of imbecility than violent madness, seized on his brain, and took away the acute intelligent fire from his eye. He recognized neither Vusefræa nor his attendant, nor even, on the following morn, when Ailred himself was brought to his bedside, could nature's self, all powerful remembrancer, remove the fatal torpor from his consciousness. He made, nevertheless, no allusion whatever to the dreadful transaction which had consummated his gloomy course. His thoughts seemed wandering to the days of his continental life, to the favourite pursuits and early successes of his youth, and his conversation was full of the vainest and silliest self-complacency.

"Thou mayest shake thine head as thou wilt," said Ailred, addressing his brother-in-law, after they had listened together to a long and rambling discourse of the sick man's, in which, after a strong denunciation of the vice of self-conceit, he recounted all the favours he had ever received from men distinguished in life, beginning with Alcuin, and stopping short when he came to Charlemagne, "thou mayest shake thy head as wisely as thou wilt, but now is not the time for me to say whose fault it is that Kenric's head is turned. Alas, poor youth! poor boy! it was never otherwise since—since—but, as I said, the time is past—poor Kenric! Ah, scholarship! ah sheepskin! it is over! The stars have done their worst, Vusefræa, now; he's moonstruck now, at last—he has his fill of it. His lunatic lunations! there's the sum of them—the sum of all those calculations with which he used—between ourselves be it spoken—make old Elfwin himself look flat and gaping. Ay, let the poor—poor

boy, enjoy his merit, his silly, empty merit; he had a gifted kind of a crack-brained wit—a patchwork of his own and others' brains, as frantic and fantastic as his own, that often gave plain sense as much to do as any learned witling's of ye all. Even still the duke speaks kindly of poor Kenric."

"The grave hides all," said old Vuscfraea, with an earnest look.

"I spake not of the dead, good brother," answered Ailred, "the dust it shields is nearer to me than thee. I speak of thee alone, and of Elfwin."

"Elfwin," said Kenric, softly, gazing on the speaker, "and wherefore should—well, but I'll not dispute it; tell Ailred I am ready to go with him to ask his pardon—any body's pardon now—for, let me whisper you a word, old man; come hither, and tell nobody—my spirit is broken quite; and it is not because he is the duke; for, hark you, I have talked with greater men, and freely too, ere now; but I'll not cross Ailred any more. Is this what they call happiness—take it away."

"'Tis strange he should not know me," whispered Ailred.

"Indeed, I crave thy pardon," continued Kenric. "I know thee well, the learned Eginhard. Don't heed the envious tongues—Virgil is right. See here, this little book will tell the truth; ask not who penned it, for after thy praise," he said, affecting to hide his face, with a foolish smile, "it would look vain in me to answer thee; where is it? Surely I had it in my bosom: oh, true—true—true, thy excellency will pardon me—I gave it to a friend in Inisfail. Ah, there's a thought—Is this the flowery way! How full of thorns it is?"

"Poor boy?" said Ailred, "learning has made him mad."

"I doubt it much," said Vuscfraea; "it follows not, because he raves of books, that books have been the

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cause of his disease. The mind was stored with knowledge, and being unhinged by some physical affliction, it naturally runs most on its disorder, on what it was accustomed to contemplate in its health. Disease or accident it is that breeds the ruin in the brain, and chance or memory directs the tone of the delirium. Had Kenric been as fond of arms as letters, this sudden violence, whate'er it be, that has benumbed his reason, would have filled his mind with fantasies, just as wild, of wars, and battles, sieges, camps, and conquest."

"Do you ask so soon the order of my funeral?" said Kenric, in a sad tone, and with a mournful smile, "even hear me, then, for, if I left no will, it might be done with too much cost and pomp, and have the hateful show of vanity. Alcuin, Claude, Clement, Scot, and Eginhard," he added, counting on his fingers, "these friends will bear the pall. If Eginhard refuse, I murmur not, for I deserve, I want humiliation. Virgil, of Saltzburg, will supply his place. Bury me near the temple in the valley, with my head against Domnona's feet, and, if you can, with a pathway across my grave, that this proud dust may be thoroughly trampled on. My coffin, did you say? Oh, plain—plain—plain."

Soon after, his delirium increased to a degree that made them tremble. Images, of a nature almost too horrid for description, seemed now to have possessed his brain, and he struggled in the hands of his friends, as if he feared that they laid hold on him for his destruction.

"Oh, bring me again," he said, imploringly, "oh, bring me once again to the point from which I started, and you shall see me run a different course. A thousand worlds to have the past again! Oh, youth, youth, youth! Give me again my fresh and faultless youth, and you shall see I will avoid it all! Oh, horror! do not bind me! Spare me! Spare me! Oh, miserable fool! Oh, blind! Oh, thoughtless! Oh, wasted, wasted hours! Oh, lost

occasions! Oh, truth despised! Oh, slighted, slighted warnings?"

Forced to remain upon his bed, his delirium arrived at a height which filled the listeners with dismay. Towards morning, however, he sunk into a deep sleep, from which he did not wake till late on the following day. When he did so, to Vuscfraea's great surprise, his phrensy and his idiocy both had wholly left him, and he spoke with perfect quietude. He recognized his father and Vuscfraea, as well as Webba, but did not manifest the slightest concern at the sight of them, nor even once inquire into the causes which had led to his present situation. Perfect consciousness, combined with a strange insensibility, appeared to have succeeded to the terrific tumult which had arisen in his mind on the preceding day.

"Uncle," he said, as Vuscfraea stood beside the bed, contemplating the sufferer with a pitying eye, "dost thou know if the old clergyman yet lives that was Domnona's confessor when I returned from Inisfail?"

Vuscfraea replied in the affirmative.

"Send Webba to him," said Kenric, "and tell him that Domnona's son desires to see him here."

"I will go to him myself; Webba, my staff," said the old man; "if Ailred should return from the duke's castle in my absence, thou wilt acquaint him whither I am gone."

When he had departed, Webba occupied his place by the bedside of Kenric, who, after looking for a long time towards the window, with an absent air, said:—

"Webba, dost thou hear the distant sound of music in the direction of the valley?"

Webba listened for some moments, but answered gently in the negative.

"I thought I heard it faintly from the west," said Kenric. "On such a morn it was that Vuscfraea brought me to Muingharid first. So calm, so still, and that song

rose, too, so peacefully. On such a morning, too, I left the hermit's dwelling in the solitary Scéilig. Does he live still in his tranquil sea-side solitude? And just on such a morning I lingered with Elim on the way to the abbey, while the verse of Sedulius swelled from the distant choir, and the sun rose calmly beyond the hills of Shior Muimhean. Webba, come hither," he continued; "that dagger, which thou seest upon the tripod, give to Vuscfraëa, when he comes, and tell him that, for all his warning, it has been still unstained. Webba, dost thou remember Deochain Neassan?"

"Ah, master! ah, dear master!" answered Webba.

Kenric continued to fix his eyes upon the attendant with a look of wandering indifference. What he had seen, and what he saw, moved Webba so much, that, even without knowing the cause of his distress, he could not refrain from tears. The sight of them seemed to awaken, in a slight degree, the attention of the sufferer, for he took Webba's hand in both of his, and let his forehead rest upon it for some moments with a sigh of relief. They remained for some moments without moving, Webba feeling at a loss what to say or do. In a little time the agitation of Kenric seemed returning, for he grasped the attendant's hand more tight, he trembled in a fitful manner, and waved his hand before him several times:

"'Tis coming at last!" he said, "I feel it coming."

"What, master?" said Webba.

"Don't leave me! do not, Webba! 'Tis coming—coming! I am sure it is! Don't leave me alone! I dread to be alone! Oh, save me! hide me! Do you hear me? Hide me!"

Poor Webba, who had never before imagined, far less witnessed, anything like this, could only answer in a soothing tone:

"I am not going any where, dear master! I will not leave you, Kenric."

By an effort, Kenric now seemed to restrain himself, and lay back silent in the bed.

"They often warned me," he continued in a low tone, "they often warned me but I followed my own course. I thought them all below me—I am humbled—humbled. So haughty! so secure in my own strength! Webba, if thou ever have a child to counsel, bid him beware of pride, and idle curiosity. Look out at the window, and tell me if they are coming."

Webba complied, throwing open the little casement for greater convenience. While he gazed along the street, in the direction of the bridge, he heard a faint but painful moan from the patient.

"Muingharid!" he murmured, in a low voice, "Muingharid! I was happy then!"

He was silent, and Webba continued for some time longer endeavouring to descry the form of Vuscfraë amongst those which passed to and fro between their dwelling and the bridge. He arrived at length, with Ailred and Domnona's aged confessor, but they came too late for Kenric. When Webba closed the window, and returned to the bedside, he found the unhappy youth already dead.

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

STILL left in mystery as to the cause of his affliction, and of the phrenetic allusions which had escaped him in his illness, his friends complied with Kenric's dying wishes, and buried him in the churchyard near the river, his sepulchre adjoining that of Domnona, in the manner he had himself desired. Years passed away, and nature claimed her right from Ailred, from Vuscfraë, and even reduced Elfwin (unconscious agent in so many strange events) to

the same level with his young antagonist in dispute, before the crime of the latter was made known in Inismore. Few then were interested in the recollection of the fortunes of the family, and all, ere long, forgot it.

In Inisfail, the event did not so soon depart from the recollection of those who had been so nearly affected by it on its first occurrence. In other respects no painful recollections remained to allay the happiness of the united families of Rath-Aedain and the Coom. It is true that the repulsion of the Scandinavian invasion was but local and temporary, and, ere long, succeeding swarms carried fire and sword throughout the whole extent of Inisfail, until the sovereignty itself was divided by a northern chief. But long before the isle was visited by this consummation of disasters, Elim and his consort, advanced in years, in happiness and honour, slept the last sleep within the bosom of their native soil.



NOTES.

[The Author's Preface, especially its concluding sentences, will readily suggest to the reader of the present edition the necessity for the following Notes. The novel was written above thirty years ago; and, though Gerald Griffin applied himself carefully to the study of what materials were then accessible on the subject of Irish History and Antiquities (application, of which this beautiful work exhibits every where extraordinary proofs), it was impossible for him not to be led into many serious errors by the falsehoods current in all the "authorities" up to that time received by "the learned." Since then a vast deal has been done in this department of study, and if Griffin were now alive to undertake such another task, he would find a sure footing. The publisher of the present edition of *THE INVASION* has thought it right, therefore, to correct, as far as possible, the involuntary errors into which the great Irish novelist was led in a work so likely to be regarded as an authority on Irish Life, Manners, and Customs, two thousand years ago. Without interfering with the text, then (save in more correctly spelling the Irish names and words employed in it), he has shortly referred the reader, at the page foot, throughout the volume, to the following NOTES, which have been prepared from critical memoranda, kindly made for the purpose by EUGENE O'CURRY, Esq., M.R.I.A., the eminent Professor of Irish History and Archæology in the Catholic University of Ireland, and perhaps the best authority upon these subjects known to the present generation. A short Glossary of the principal Irish words used in the text has also been appended, for the use of readers unacquainted with the language.]

NOTE I. (Page 9.) *The Eremonians.*

The Eremonians were that branch of the Milesians descended from Eireamhon (or Eremon), one of the two sons of *Miledh* (or Milesius), who survived the Invasion of Erin, and divided the sovereignty of the country between them. The genealogy of the Milesian race is traced in the notes to the *Miscellany of the Celtic Society* (1849), edited by Dr. O'Donovan; in the *Battle of Magh Rath*, edited by Dr. O'Donovan, for the Irish Archæological Society (1842); and in the notes to the *Battle of Magh Leana*, published by the Celtic Society (1855), edited by Professor O'Curry. Their immediate progenitor, in Spain, was *Breógan*, who dwelt in the north of Portugal, and Galicia; from whose name Braga in Portugal, and Brigantia,—“now called Compostella,” in Galicia, according to Buchanan. This *Breógan* had two sons, *Bilé* and *Ith*. *Bilé* was the father of *Miledh* (Milesius). *Ith* was the father of *Lughaidh* (a name pronounced “Lowee,” nearly, or like the French *Louis*). *Miledh* (Milesius) had a number of sons, of whom three were in particular remarkable, as the progenitors of the most distinguished families of this race, who alone gave monarchs to Erin for ever afterwards. These were: *Eibhear* (or Eber), the ancestor of the MacCarthys, O'Sullivans, O'Callaghans, O'Briens, and all the royal races of Munster, who are thence called *Eberians*: *Eireamhon* (or Eremon), the ancestor of the O'Neills, and the O'Donnells, and of the royal lines of Ulster and Leinster, all of whom are thence called *Eremonians*: and *Ir*, the ancestor of the kings of *Uladh*, or North-east Ulster, now represented by the clan of Magennis, in the north, and from whom are also descended several families now long settled in Munster, such as the O'Loghlens of Burren, the O'Connor Kerry, etc., thence also *Irians*.

NOTE II. (Page 9.) *Musical Instruments of Ancient Erin.*

Many of the names and descriptions of musical instruments to be found in the text of THE INVASION are, unfortunately, quite incorrect, in consequence of the want of any accessible authority upon Irish antiquities at the time the novel was composed. The author had then, in fact, but one source to which to apply himself for information in detail, namely, Walker's “Irish Bards,” and the essays published in the same volume, by the Rev. W. Beaufort. The greater part of the statements both of Mr. Walker and Mr. Beaufort are, however,

totally destitute of foundation. Names are freely invented, which are unknown to the Irish scholar, and instruments described, and customs descanted on, for which there is absolutely no authority, not even so much as in any allusion to be found in any ancient MS., or any other reliable record. It very often happens, too, that Messrs. Walker and Beaufort take a modern word (often an altered English word, not a century old), representing an object or invention, or else an action or custom, quite modern; and making of this an ancient name for themselves, they gradually assure the student of these fanciful essays that such and such a thing existed, and under such and such a name two thousand years ago. And, unfortunately, mistakes or inventions of this class pervade the work referred to so generally that it would be idle to attempt to correct it without rewriting and newly casting the entire. The reader of *THE INVASION*, therefore, must be content, for the present, simply to take with suspicion the details of ordinary life which the author was forced to draw from Walker's publications. Within the limits of the present note no more can be done than to name to him those of the musical instruments mentioned in the text, which really did exist in very early times, according to positive authority; and to point out the principal of those, borrowed from Walker, which are either entirely modern, or else never had any existence at all. [A full account of our ancient musical instruments will form a part of Professor O'Curry's Second Series of Lectures at the Catholic University, now in course of delivery.]

HORNS.—*Adharc* (pronounced "eye-ärc,") was a horn; the horn of an ox. *Adharca* is the plural form. *Adharca Ciúil*, literally "musical horns." The simple Irish for a horn was *Corn*; from which *Cornairé* (pronounced "córnaré,") a horn-blower. *Corn Buabhaill* (pronounced "corn böö-vil") was a horn generally made of an ox's horn, called, for shortness, *Buabhall* (pronounced "böö-val"). *Corn*, simply, was the name applied to such horns as those very large ones of bronze, open at both ends, preserved in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy; such horns were used in processions. The short, thick, bronze horn, closed at one end, of which the Museum also contains some fine specimens, was called the *Stoc* (pronounced "stuck"); and a player upon it *Stocairé* (pronounced "stückaré"). The *Goll Trompa*, mentioned in the text, was not a "Danish trumpet." The name, as applied to anything ancient, is pure invention. It is the *modern* name for a common

soldier's trumpet; *goll trompa* means simply the "foreign (that is, the English) trumpet."

HARPS.—The word *Cláirseach* (pronounced "clarsheach") is quite modern, and never was employed to signify a harp until within the last two centuries; it is never found in any ancient MS. The word is from *clár*, a board; and refers probably to the sounding board. The ancient name for a harp was *Cruit*; a word which never signified a violin, or fiddle, as imagined by Messrs. Walker and Beaufort. There were two kinds of *Cruit*, one large and the other small; both were so called; but the smaller was also called a *Ceis* (pronounced "kesh"), literally the Charmer. This smaller harp was used with the larger, the one accompanying the other. The *Tiompán* was also a sort of harp,—certainly a stringed instrument;—and it is only spoken of as such down to the seventeenth century. Notwithstanding the apparent etymological meaning, or connection, of the word, it certainly never meant a drum, among the Irish; nor is there any record or mention of, or any allusion to, a drum of any kind, nor any ancient name for one, in any old Irish MS., or in the old language.

VIOLINS, OR FIDDLES.—It has been observed already that the *Cruit* was not a violin, but a harp. The only name for a violin in Irish is *Fidiol*; plural, *Fidlé*: and this word, as describing the instrument, occurs in so very old an authority as the poem on the Fair of *Carman*, in the Book of Leinster, a MS. of A.D. 1120–1150.

PIPES.—The old, and correct, name for the pipes was simply *Pioppaidhe* (pronounced "pee-vey"), "the pipes." The exact nature of the ancient instrument is unknown. The name *piob mála* is quite modern, and means *bag-pipe*: it is but a translation of the English name, and is unknown in correct Irish.

FLUTES, ETC.—The *Cuistlé Cíúil* (pronounced "cushla cíool," nearly), literally the musical pipe, was an ancient wind instrument, supposed to be like the modern flute. The *Fídeóg* was not an ancient instrument, nor is the word an old one; it is the modern name for the Fife.

DRUMS.—There was no such instrument as a drum, of any kind, among the ancient Irish, so far as can be known. The *tiompán* was not a drum, but a species of stringed instrument, or harp, as above mentioned.

"Kiernine,"
 "Crotalin,"
 "Crotalum,"
 "Cionan,"
 "Creamthine,"
 "Dudog,"
 "Conloingean,"
 "Corn bean,"
 "Readan,"
 "Corabas,"
 "Oirphean,"

These words are all coined : they are not old or correct Irish words at all : and there is not the slightest authority for the existence, among the old Irish, of any instruments passing under such names, or of such nature, as pretended by the writer of the Essays in Walker's "Irish Bards." The bell, in early Christian times was *Clog*. There is no such word as *crotalum*, nor does any such word signify a bell.

NOTE III. (Pages 10, 78, etc.) *Soldiers, and Arms used by them, in Ancient Erin.*

Marc Sluagh was the general word for Cavalry ; from *marc*, a horse, and *sluagh*, a host, or army. The *Ceithern* (or "Kerne") was probably a company of soldiers : *Ceithernach* (pronounced nearly "Kérnagh"), was a simple soldier,—one of a band or company of soldiers. The *Gall-óglaich* was a mercenary soldier ; literally "foreign soldier," from *gall*, foreign, and *oglaich*, a professional soldier : but this word is quite premature in the text, for it is of late introduction, not earlier than the twelfth century ; indeed, mercenary or paid soldiers, hired foreign soldiers, were unknown in the earlier times, and first came into Ireland from Scotland. The *Féar-Cómhláinn-Caoguid*, mentioned in the text, was by no means a "Captain of Fifty men,"—that would be *taoiseach caoguid* (pronounced "theeshagh coegad")—but a Champion who would fight fifty men ; a class of heroes naturally not very numerous. The words are, literally, *fear*, man ; *comhlann* "co-blade" (that is, in single combat) ; and *caoguid*, fifty.

KNIGHTS.—The word *Ridairé*, for "knight," is quite wrong : there is no such old Irish word. This word is, in fact, a mere modern corruption of the English word "rider," or horseman, and the idea is only borrowed from the Anglo-Normans ; for the knight of ancient Ireland was simply a champion, one admitted into the Order of Champions, and generally first educated for it, so as to become absolutely expert in every species of fighting. But his "knighthood," or Championship, was in no way connected with his being a rider, or horseman. The ancient Irish word for a champion was *Níadh* (pronounced "nee-a"). His badge of honor was a golden garter, or torque,

which was called the *Nasg Niadh*, literally the "clasp-knights;" and also the *ferenn*. This *Nasg Niadh* is mentioned in Cormac's Glossary (A.D. 900), as placed round the leg of a champion distinguished in battle, and which he subsequently wore as a mark of his distinction. The champion was also called *Curadh* (pronounced "curra"); plural, *curaidhe* ("curree").

ARMS, ETC.--The *Cathbarr* (pronounced "cow-bar," nearly), was the helmet; it was of bronze. The shield was the *Sciath* (pronounced, nearly, "skēē-a"). It was probably of wicker-work, bound and partly covered with bronze. The "brazen-headed javelin," mentioned in the text, was nothing like the short thick javelin of the Greeks; no such weapon was used by the ancient Irish, though they did cast as well as thrust with a light bronze-headed spear. The spear was anciently called *Sleagh* (pronounced "shleá"). The dart, or small javelin, was called the *Gae*. There is no reference made to a bow in any ancient MS., in reference to the very remote times; but there may have been such an instrument; for we find a small spear described under the name of *Saighead*, a word by which an arrow is still known among the Irish-speaking people. The modern Irish for a bow (as used in the Annals of the Four Masters, 250 years ago) is *Fíodhbac* (pronounced "fēē-a-back"), which comes from *fíodh*, wood, and *bach*, bent; but there is no ancient word for bow known to us. The *Crann Tabhail* (pronounced "crann towel") was a sling; stones were generally slung from them: the word comes from *crann*, a tree, and *tabhall*, a tablet, or thin board; the sling being probably made of a split stick, giving the power of a spring. The battle-axe was called *Biail*, and was a sort of hatchet; the word is derived, in Cormac's Glossary, from *bith* (pronounced "bēēh"), "life," "always;" and *ail*, sharp; i.e., "always sharp." The chariot was called *Carbad*: the war chariot was, like that of the ancient Britons, armed with scythes, or knives, set in it, and was called the *Carbad Searrdha* (pronounced "shárr-a"), or serrated chariot. The "heavy sword and scian," described in the text, were not the arms of ancient Ireland, but of modern Scotland. The Scottish "Claymore," *Cloidheamh Mór* (pronounced "Clee-av mor"), literally "great sword," was not ancient.

Every sept (and family chief) doubtless had its banner, since we know that banners were used in the most ancient times in Ireland, and that particular chiefs and families were distinguished by certain banners or signs; such as the red

hand, the snake, etc. [See note H, p. 343, to O'Donovan's *Battle of Magh Rath* (Irish Archæological Society, 1842), *On the Armorial Bearings of the Ancient Irish*.]

War-cries were also used by each clann or family; but we have none preserved of any certain antiquity. The general battle shout was, *Flairé! Flairé!* (pronounced, nearly, "farra! farra!"), a word which means literally, vigilance, or watch! watch! The shout of *a-bó!* does not appear to be Irish, and was certainly not ancient. It was perhaps nothing more than the English word *above*, used in the sense of the Irish war-cry of the middle ages, such as that of the Dalcassians (though there is no old authority even for this):—*Lamh láidir an uachtar* (pronounced "lauv lawdir an ōchter"), i.e., "the strong hand uppermost," or "above."

The words "gen" and "hobbeler," are unknown in Irish phraseology.

The statement in the text (pp. 78, 120, etc.), respecting a treatise on military tactics, said to have been written by the celebrated King of Erin, *Sedna Innarraigh* (who flourished, according to the Annals, about 929 years before Christ), is without any authority whatever. Nothing of the kind is even alluded to in any of our MSS., much less has anything of the kind been preserved to us.

NOTE IV. (Pages 10, 92, etc.) *Clann Names*.

"The reins were held by O'Headha [properly O'h-Aedha] (so named by way of emphasis)..." (p. 10). This is correct, in so far as that, after the adoption of surnames, in the eleventh century, the chief of each name was distinguished by the name alone, while all others of his clann were spoken of and addressed by their own, or Christian names, prefixed to that of the clann, or family. But the author has adopted, or fallen into, an anachronism, in introducing clann names into a story, the period of which is fixed so early. King NIALL FROSACH, mentioned in the opening of the first chapter, flourished between the years 759 and 766, when he was succeeded by DONNCHADH MAC DOMHNAILL, who was in turn succeeded by AEDH (or HUGH) OIRNIDE, in 793, according to the Annals of the Four Masters. Surnames were, however, first taken in Ireland under the direction of the celebrated BRIAN MAC CINNEIDIGH (called BOROIMHE), who became *Ard Righ*, or Chief King, of Erin in 1002—a monarch perhaps still more distinguished for his wisdom in peace and his ability in civil administration, even than for his gallantry and skill in war

NOTE V. (Page 11.) *Dress of a Chieftain.*

Some of the names of articles of dress introduced in the text are misapplied. The *Barréad* was a head dress, but it was only a species of turban. The word is not ancient; and in modern times it was only applied to a woman's head-dress, such as that consisting of a Barcelona handkerchief coiled about the head, so as to stand up in a peak,—a costume much worn in Munster up to half a century ago, and there still generally called a *barréad*. The ancient head-dress of a man, in time of peace, was called the *Ceinnéide* (pronounced "Kin-nêdy"), which was probably the conical cap, or hat. It is from this word, signifying the hat or cap, that the name of *Ceinneidé*, (or Kennedy), the father of *Brian Boroinhê*, from whom the clann O'Kennedy; just as among the O'Donnells we find the word *Cáthbarr*, used as a Christian name—a word which means, literally, a helmet. The *Cochall* was a short cloak, or cape, covering the shoulders; green was the favourite colour of this garment. The Gælic gentlemen wore also, however, a full cloak, or long mantle, reaching to the ancles, which was called the *Brat*. (It is scarcely necessary to say that the statement of Spenser, and other Englishmen, that the Irish ever wore *only* this mantle, is utterly unfounded.) Underneath the mantle, or the short cloak (whichever was carried), they wore next the skin a shirt of linen [*léinê* (pronounced "léna") was the ancient name for a shirt; *lin*, was flax-spun material; the chief often wore a shirt of silk, which was called *leiné síoda*]; a *trivibis* (pronounced nearly, "trú-is"), or hose of woollen stuff, generally striped, or crossed in different colours, and which united pantaloons and stockings in a single piece; and a surcoat (*ionar*), also of woollen, a sort of tight, single-breasted frock coat buttoned down the front, and reaching nearly to the knees. A curious example of these garments is preserved in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy.

ORNAMENTS.—The *fleasg* was a bracelet torque. The Torque (when the word is used by itself) should apply only to the ornament or collar which was worn round the neck, that is, the *muintore*, or neck torque. Both were, as the word implies, formed of twisted plates, or folds, of the metal employed. A considerable number of beautiful gold torques, of both kinds, are preserved in the splendid Museum of the Royal Irish Academy. The Fibula, spoken of in the text, is there men

tioned as a shoulder brooch, but this is not correct. The brooch was always on the breast: it was called *Eo* (pronounced "yó"), literally, the Salmon, probably from the form of some favourite design; its general name was the *Breatnas*, cloak-tie; from *brát*, a cloak, and *nasg*, bind, or tie; it was also called the *Deálg*; literally, the thorn, spike, or pin. In one instance, in the text, pearls are represented as having been worn as part of the ornaments of a chieftain's dress; this, however, is incorrect; there is no case mentioned of pearls being worn save by women, though by them they were frequently used. The ancient word for a pearl was *néumonn*, derived from *níamh* (pronounced "neev"), lustre.

NOTE VI. (Page 11.) *War-cries.*

War-cries were certainly used in battle, consisting of exclamations specially appropriated to particular clans; but the addition of "a-bó!" or "aboo!" to the clann name has no ancient authority. [See at the end of NOTE III. ante.]

NOTE VII. (Page 11.) "*Thanists*" and "*Thanistry*" in *Ancient Erin*.

The word *Tanaisté* means literally, a Successor, and *Tanaistecht* (called by English writers Tanistry), Successorship. In Professor O'Curry's Introduction to the edition of the *Battle of Magh Leana* (published by the Celtic Society, 1853), he explains the Irish system of Tanistry, as it really was, as follows:—

"There was no invariable rule of succession in the Milesian times, but, according to the general tenor of our ancient accounts, the eldest son succeeded the father, to the exclusion of all collateral claimants of the same line, as well as his brothers, unless it happened that he was disqualified by some personal deformity or blemish, or by natural imbecility, or crime; or unless, as happened in after ages, by parental testament, or mutual compact, the succession was made alternate in two or more families, as will be seen below. The eldest son being thus recognised as the presumptive heir and successor to the dignity, was denominated *Tanaisté*, that is minor or second, whilst all the other sons, or persons that were eligible in case of his failure, were simply called *Righdamhna*, that is, king-material, or king-makings. When, however, the succession was alternate (between two families), then, upon the death of the King, or Chief, he was not succeeded by his own son, or

brother, but by the senior member (male) of the other line, subject to the disqualifications already mentioned. The *Tanaisté*, whosoever he might be, had a separate maintenance and establishment, as well as distinct privileges and liabilities. He was inferior to the King or Chief, but above all the other dignitaries of the state, as laid down in the ancient Institutes of Erin, commonly called the Brehon Laws."

See also Appendix, No. II., to the same volume (p. 176). On the Irish Law of *Tunaisteacht*.

NOTE VIII. (Page 12.) *Finnglin, the Physician.*

Finnglin (a name commonly Englished "Florence"), pronounced, nearly, "Fin-yeen," was suggested to the author as that of the celebrated physician *Finnglin Fáith-liagh*. (See also at p. 29 of the text.) [*Fáith-liagh* means "prophetic physician," that is, one that knows prophetically what caused the wound as well as what would cure it.]

NOTE IX. (Page 12.) *Brehon Learning.*

The passage in the text is quite fanciful. No such things as "megbote," "manbote," etc., were known to Irish law at all, however to Saxon. There is no such word as *slauciag*. And as for "sreath," it is probably intended for *srag*, which is the modern name for a modern thing, namely, the tax called County Cess; it means literally, "spread" tax, *i. e.*, money voted in the lump, and then "spread" over the country for payment. No such thing existed in ancient times. The *Breathamh* ("Brehon"), Judge, or professional Tribe Lawyer, was really bound to know (see Cambrensis Evercus, published by the Celtic Society), the following laws: the *Cáin Phádraig* (the law against killing oxen used in ploughing, etc.); the *Cáin Dairé* (the law against killing milch cows); the *Cáin Adamnain* (the law against the appearance of women in battle); the *Cáin Íanamnais* (the law of husband and wife); the *Cáin altroma* (the law of fosterage); the *Urradus* (the local clann law, or law of territory); and the *Cáin Cáirdé* (the law of amity, or law regulating the relations between each two adjoining clans).

There was no such person as a *dresbdeartach*.

NOTE X. (Page 12.) *Giants.*

No such personages as Giants are ever referred to in any of the ancient legends. Their introduction is a vulgar modern invention.

NOTE XI. (Pages 12, 348.) *The Order of Poets, or Philosophers, in Ancient Erin.*

[See Appendix, No. I. (on the *Filé*) p. 461, of Professor O'Curry's *Lectures on the MS. Materials of Ancient Irish History*, published by the Catholic University (James Duffy, Dublin and London; 1861). The subject is still more fully explained in one of the Lectures of Mr. O'Curry's current course, not yet printed.]

NOTE XII. (Page 15.) *The Ithian Clanns.*

[See ante, NOTE 1, as to *Ith*, the uncle of *Miledh* (or Milesius), whose descendants are thus named. For a full account of these clanns see the *Miscellany of the Celtic Society* (1849), edited by Dr. J. O'Donovan; and especially p. 5, and Note (o).]

NOTE XIII. (Page 15.) *The Eoganacht Clanns.*

The descendants of *Eogan Mór*, the son of *Oilioll Olum*. [See a full account of these and other Munster clanns in the *Battle of Magh Leana*, edited by Professor O'Curry, for the Celtic Society (1852). The author is wrong in placing the O'Connells among the Eoghanachts, as will be seen by reference to the same volume]. An amusing misprint occurs in the note E, in this page, 9; for "Denmark," read "Desmond." The word Desmond is indeed but a corruption of *Deas Mhumhain*, i.e. South Munster.

NOTE XIV. (Page 17.) *Dances.*

Unfortunately, nothing certain is known of the forms or movement of any ancient Irish dance. The *rinnceadh fáda*, named in the text, was not one; the expression is quite modern, and means nothing more than the French "contre danse," or, as it is misnamed in English, the "country dance."

NOTE XV. (Page 19.) *The Druids—"Hooded People."*

The author has been entirely misled by his authorities (Messrs. Walker, Beaufort, etc.), as to the Druids: and, unfortunately, the mistakes into which he has fallen on this subject pervade the entire volume. (See pp. 19, 20, 37, 38, 73, 93, 100, 101, 104, 105, 107, 112, 124, 127, 144, 179, 345, 346, etc.). The idea of a "Hooded People" (p. 101, etc.), is purely imaginary. There was, indeed, no such thing at all as a Druid "race" (pp

73, 93, etc.), nor any Druid "governors," nor were there any "Druid laws," at any time or in any part of Erin. There is nothing whatever known in detail of the "worship," or of the philosophy, or religion, of the Druids; but there is no authority whatever for supposing that they or any portion of the people of Erin, even in pagan times, worshipped the planets (p. 100, etc.), or fire (pp. 112, 124, 127). "*Samhuin*," so often mentioned in the text (pp. 20, 100, 107, 144, 179, 345, etc.), was not a goddess, at all, but the name of a season—that, namely, which succeeds the summer, the word being derived by Cormac—whose Glossary is of A.D. 900—from *samh*, summer, and *fuin*, ending, or the end. There was no such order as of "Druid virgins." There was no such thing as "Perpetual Fire" kept up, except in Christian churches (pp. 112, 124, 127); [and see post, Note xxvii.]. The allusions to Druidical rites, at pp. 104, 105, are wholly void of authority; and there was no such thing as a "nain" or a "trilithon," either in name or sense, any where alluded to. The sole instance of idol-worship recorded is that of the *Crom Cruach*: and this is not referred to as Druidical at all. It seems to have been an image of a serpent form—*crom* signifying properly a maggot [see Professor O'Curry's *Lectures on the MS. Materials of Ancient Irish History*, Appendix, No. cli., p. 632, published for the Catholic University; James Duffy, Dublin and London, 1861]. There is no allusion to any "altars" used, or "sacrifices" of any kind offered up, by the Druids of Ireland. All assertions of this kind are entirely unwarranted, save by the inventive imaginations of the school of pseudo-antiquarians of the last generation.

NOTE XVI. (Page 21.) "*Spré*;" "*calph-an-spreidh*;"—*Dowry*.

Colpa spreidh (so the words should run). But there is no such word in the sense in the text. *Colpa* is applied (in speaking of stocking lands) to six sheep, or to one full-grown cow, or to two heifers: as, to the question, how many *colpa* have you? a man may answer: I have six,—meaning that he has three full-grown cows, four heifers (equal to two cows), and six sheep (equal to one cow more). *Spreidh* means literally cattle; and the word *spreidh*, by itself, is now used to signify a girl's marriage fortune.

NOTE XVII. (Page 37.) *Round Towers*.

Since the publication of Dr. Petrie's great work upon the *Round Towers*, it would be useless to reiterate the arguments

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by which he has proved,—and in the opinion of all the learned proved indisputably,—that they are of Christian origin. The author has in this passage been misled, as in others, by the ignorant “authorities,” already alluded to as those alone accessible when this was composed. Suffice it to observe here, that there is no instance whatever of any Round Towers having been proved to have existed before the Fifth Century, or to have been erected or even used by pagans; while several records and authorities referred to by Dr. Petrie allude to the erection and use of these buildings by Christian Ecclesiastics, from the fifth to the thirteenth century.

NOTE XVIII. (Page 37.) *The Shamrock.*

The introduction of the “Shamrock” here is quite unwarranted. Moreover, however we may regret that the truth obliges us to say so,—there is not even a vestige of authority for the (modern) legend of the use made by St. Patrick of the Shamrock, whether clover or wood-sorrel, in explaining the mystery of the Trinity to King *Laeghare*; nor is the very modern custom of wearing the Shamrock on St. Patrick’s Day founded on any ancient tradition; nor is the employment of the Shamrock as a national emblem, in any form, warranted by any historical authority whatever. The word is derived from *Seamhair* (pron. “shamuir”), clover; *Seamhair óg*, or *Seamróg* (pron. “shamróg”), Little Clover. As for the Wood Sorrel, it is in Irish *samhsog* (an independent word, the termination of which is not a diminutive). *Samhadh* (pron. nearly, “sōd”) is Sorrel; *Samhaah bé*, Cow-Sorrel,—a sorrel having a broad juicy leaf; *Samhadh caorach*, Sheep Sorrel—a sorrel of the hill side, having a small dry red tuft. *Samhsóg* is a modification of the same word.

NOTE XIX. (Page 40.) *Mungairid, or Mungret Abbey* (near Limerick).

Mungairit was so called from a little stream passing through it. The church there was founded in St. Patrick’s time by the *Deóchan Neassan* (Deacon *Neassan*), a disciple of the Apostle. [See the Tripartite Life.] He founded a city about the church.

NOTE XX. (Page 40.) *Saint Mainchín.*

Saint *Mainchín* (whose name is now barbarised “Munchir”) was the founder of the first Cathedral Church of Limerick. He

flourished about A.D. 600, or a century and a half after the Deacon *Neassan*.

NOTE XXI. (Page 43.) *The Rock of Carraig ó g-Conaill* (near Limerick).

This is the rock over the Shannon just below Limerick, corruptly called "Carrig a Gunnell," and wrongly (by a modern mistranslation of the sound of that name) the "Candle Rock." Griffin himself has indeed immortalised a modern legend, composed to account for this wrong name, in one of his best minor tales,—the "Rock of the Candle,"—so gracefully, that one half regrets to be unable to accept the story. The Castle was in fact that of "O'Connelloe,"—a castle of the O'Briens, built between 1450 and 1500. "O'Connelloe" is a corruption of the Irish name of the territory (which extended over the present Baronies of Upper and Lower Connelloe), of *Ui Conaill Gabhra*, i.e. the Territory of *Conal Gabhra*, a chief of the Eoghanacht race (see ante, Note XIII.), who was the ancestor of the O'Donovans, etc.

NOTE XXII. (Page 69.) *The Coolun*.

Not only Griffin but also Moore was misled as to this word. There was no such thing as a *Coolun*, or *Coolin*, in the sense intended by either; and we must in this case also without remorse withdraw the foundation from one of the most popular of poetical fancies. The air to which Moore wrote his celebrated song (an air probably many centuries old), was only called "The Coolin" about a hundred years ago for the first time, and then only in reference to Irish words written to it by Father Oliver O'Hanley, a poet of that period, in praise of a beauty of the County Limerick of the name of Nelly O'Grady. The word (*cuil-fionn*, "fair-haired") is there, however, used in its true sense; no such word was ever, or ever could have been, applied to the "glibbs," or long tufts of back hair, prohibited by old English statutes, which were directed against all Irish hair, whether dark or fair in colour. The first verse of the song, as it stands in Professor O'Curry's translation is merely literal line for line:—

Who would see the Fair-Haired [girl],
And she walking upon the roads,
On a summer-day morning,
And the dew on her brogues;

And all the blue-eyed young fellows,
Who are anxious to marry her,—
But they shall not get my love
On the conditions they expect [&c.]

NOTE XXIII. (Page 71.) *Queen Meibhé.*

The story of Queen *Meabh* (or Meav,—in English literature “Mab”),—the celebrated Queen of Connacht,—is shortly told in Keating’s History of Ireland (O’Mahony’s edition, p. 265; and her death, p. 277). It is fully given, however, in Professor O’Curry’s *Lectures on the MS. Materials of Ancient Irish History*, just published (James Duffy; Dublin: 1861), to which the Irish reader is referred.

NOTE XXIV. (Page 79.) *Lis Lachtin.*

So called from Saint *Lachtan*, who flourished about A.D. 600; the same the beautifully ornamented shrine of whose arm (preserved as a relic) attracted so much attention among the finest specimens of ancient Irish workmanship at the Dublin Exhibition in 1853. The “marine academy on the shores of the *Sionainn*” (Shannon), however, spoken of in the text, is purely imaginary. No such seminary, nor anything like it, ever in fact existed.

NOTE XXV. (Page 102.) *Houses in Ancient Erin.*

The most minute account of the construction and furniture of a superior house in Ancient Erin is preserved in one of the “Fenian Poems,” quoted by Professor O’Curry in Lecture xiv. p. 309, and Appendix 94, page 594, of his *Lectures on the MS. Materials of Ancient Irish History*, just published (James Duffy; 1861). Much information in detail concerning ancient houses is recorded in the Laws, commonly called Brehon Laws, soon to be published in full by the Commission under whose auspices Dr. O’Donovan and Professor O’Curry have been for some years engaged in translating and noting that great collection. Upon this, as well as upon every other subject connected with the details of Irish domestic life in very early times, Professor O’Curry’s current course at the Catholic University (on the “Manners, Customs, and Social Life of the Ancient Irish”), when printed, will be found to contain all the information needed by the novelist, of which, unfortunately, Gerald Griffin had no means of possessing himself when “The Invasion” was composed.

NOTE XXVI. (Page 108.) *The Three Sons of Miledh (or "Milesius").*

Eibhear (or Eber), *Eireamhon* (or Eremon), and *Amergin*. [See *ante*, Note I. And for a full account of the family of *Miledh* ("Milesius"), and the ancient authorities concerning the Milesian Conquest, see Professor O'Curry's Lectures so often referred to (just published ; James Duffy, 1861).]

NOTE XXVII. (Page 112.) *Saint Brigid of Kildare*

There is no positive authority for the legend of a Perpetual Fire kept up at Kildare Abbey by Saint *Brigid* and her successors. Moore was here again misled, and believed, only because he wished to believe, a poetic story (v. "The bright lamp that lay on Kildare's holy shrine," &c.). Our great virgin saint—the patroness of Erin (the "Mary of the Gaedhil" as she was called ; see the notes to the *Liber Hymnorum*, lately published by the Irish Archæological and Celtic Society)—is indeed recorded to have "perpetually watched the Lord, like a Shepherdess," but by no means in the form of a Fire. [See *ante*, Note XV.]

NOTE XXVIII. (Page 117.) *Roilig na Riogh.*

The Cemetery of the Kings ; the great Pagan Cemetery near the ancient Rath of *Cruachan*, in Connacht, in Roscommon (a short distance from Carrick-on-Shannon), where the last pagan Monarch, *Dathi*, was buried, over whose grave the "red pillar stone" still stood in the time of Duaid MacFirbis, 1650. [See Professor O'Curry's Lectures, just published, p. 288 ; and see also Note (m), at p. 24 of the *Tribes and Customs of Hy-Fiachrach*, published by the Irish Archæological Society, 1844, edited by Dr. J. O'Donovan, who saw the *Coirthé Dearg* (the red pillar-stone) in the same place in 1837.]

NOTE XXIX. (Page 120.) *Salique Law.*

There was no such thing as a "Salique Law" in Erin. The law against the succession of women to the throne, or the fief, on the continent, was strictly a Feudal law, the growth of the Feudal System of the Middle Ages. The ancient laws of Erin knew no feudalism, nor were they nor were the social institutions of Erin ever in the slightest degree founded on or even tainted by feudalism,—the rights of property and the magis-

terial power of their chiefs being here founded upon totally different principles. Few women ever governed in Erin, naturally enough; but there was no law against such a thing. And in fact some instances did occur of the succession of women to the throne, under some special compact or arrangement,—as in the case of *Macha* the celebrated foundress of *Ard-Macha* (Armagh), who was by no means a usurper; and Queen *Meabh* (see *ante*, Note XXIII.), who was also a Queen in her own right. [See Professor O'Curry's Lectures, already referred to *passim*.]

NOTE XXX. (Page 120.) *Maon*.

This was *Labhraidh* (called "*Loingseach*," or the Wanderer over Sea), who was expelled from his native Principality of Leinster on the murder of his father, 500 years before Christ, and who took refuge in France, whence he afterwards returned to assert successfully his right to the throne of the Province. [See a full account of this interesting passage of history in Professor O'Curry's *Lectures on the MS. Materials of Ancient Irish History*, at Lecture XII., page 252 (just published; James Duffy; 1861), and see Keating (O'Mahony's edition, pp. 251, 252, et seq.).]

NOTE XXXI. (Page 131.) *Sumptuary Law*.

There were Sumptuary Laws under many of the ancient Monarchs even in very early times. But they were not in any sense "Druidical."

NOTE XXXII. (Page 143.) *Dealg Fallainé*.

[See *ante*, Note V]. *Fallaing* was a Mantle; *Dealg Fallainé*, the pin or brooch-fastening of a mantle.

NOTE XXXIII. (Page 192.) *Kernes and Gallóglachs*.

[See *ante*, Note III.] The word "gallowglass" is but an English corruption of gallóglach. As to the picture of a Funeral procession in the text here (page 192), it is entirely fanciful; there is no authority for any such processions as that described.

NOTE XXXIV. (Page 195.) *Power of a Chieftain*.

The statement here made of the power of a Chieftain over his people being "nominally absolute," is totally wrong. No such thing was consistent with either the letter of the ancient Irish

laws or the spirit of the constitutional system of the Clanns. The Chief possessed neither power nor property absolutely, as Chief. He was the hereditary, or at least the family-elected, President of the Tribe in peace, and in war their supreme leader in the field; but that was all. He could only govern according to certain regular laws, and his power and privileges were defined and circumscribed as the rights and privileges of every individual in the tribe were defined and protected by those laws. He was subject to his tribe, as well as his tribe to him. And the Tribe Territory was in no respect his, but that of the whole Clann over which he presided. [See the "Book of Rights," published by the Celtic Society, in 1848.] All the information on the subject will, of course, be recorded in the forthcoming publication of the "Brehon Laws." The general facts concerning the ancient Irish system of government have also been explained by Professor O'Curry, in his current course of lectures in the Catholic University, not yet, however, in print.

NOTE XXXV. (Page 215.) *The Cimbri.*

The "Cimbri" were by no means the same people as the Danish Vikings. They were (see Amadée Thierry's *Histoire des Gaulois*; De Harmonville's *Dictionnaire des Dates*, voc. "Cimbres," and "Kimbri," etc.), a branch of the great Celtic race, known to the Greeks, a thousand years before Christ, as the "Kimmeroi," on the Black Sea (from whom the Crimea), and who passed to the Baltic about 600 B.C., to settle in Jutland, Denmark, etc.; but they migrated thence on three separate occasions, overrunning Germany, and passing into Italy as well as through Gaul into Spain. On the last of these occasions (101 B.C.) a great many of them were defeated by Marius, near Arles, in the south of France. The ancestors of the Welsh people were of these "Cimbri," known as the Kymry (the C of the Romans, like that of the Irish, was pronounced hard), a name which is only fancifully derived by Welsh antiquarians from Gomer.

NOTE XXXVI. (Page 322.) *The Féis (or Parliumént) of Teamair (Tara).*

Mac Firbis, speaking of the great King *Ollamh Fódhla*, describes the *Féis Teamhrach* as follows (see the passage in Professor O'Curry's Lectures, just published; p. 218):

Ollamh Fódhla, the King of Erin, was so called from the

extent of his *Ollamh* learning; for *Eochaidh* was his first name. It was he that first made the *Feis* of Tara, which was the great convocation of the men of Erin, and which was continued by the Kings of Erin from that down, every third year, to preserve the laws and rules, and to purify the history of Erin, and to write in the *Saltair* of Tara, that is the Book of the *Ard Righ* (Chief King, or Monarch) of Erin."

[See also Dr. Petrie's exhaustive Essay *On the History and Antiquities of Tara*, read before the Royal Irish Academy, in 1839; a paper which is unfortunately buried in the "Transactions" of that learned body, and which it is a shame not to have long since published to the world.]

NOTE XXXVII. (Page 322.) *Jugglers and Jesters.*

There was a regular profession of jugglery and legerdemain, to which allusion is made in the "Brehon Laws," and spoken of in ancient stories. They were not fools, nor half-witted persons, but performers. There were also fools—generally smart, intelligent, privileged, satirical persons. Such a fool was called *Druth*. The juggler was *Cleasaighé* (plural, *Cleasamhnaigh*).

NOTE XXXVIII. (Page 331.) *The Banner or Ensign of Ancient Erin.*

There is no account of, nor any authority in support of the existence of any National Banner or Flag in ancient Erin. Such a device as a "harp and snake interwoven" is wholly imaginary. (The word "*canabhas*," used in the text, is, moreover, mere modern English; it is nothing more than "canvas," spelled in modern Irish.) The *Onchu* (literally an otter) was a figure over a flag (*Meirgê*), probably the figure of an otter, or some fanciful animal, through whose body the flag-spear passed. Every Chief had his peculiar personal flag; and over every tent stood a flag.

NOTE XXXIX. (Page 331.) *The Insignia of a King of Erin.*

The Crown worn by a King was called the *Minn Righ*; there was no such word or thing as "*aïson*" (misprinted *aïson*, in the text). [See Professor O'Curry's Lectures, just published (Lecture ii., p. 44, and App. xxvi., p. 510), for a minute account of the royal costume of the Monarch *Cormac Mac Airt*, on his appearance at the *Feis* of Tara, from the Book of Ballymote.]

NOTE XL. (Page 331.) "*Degraded Firbolgs.*"

The Firbolgs were subjugated; they were not otherwise degraded or enslaved at all. They do not appear as a separate people after their conquest by the *Tuatha Dé Danann*, long before the coming of the Milesians. [See Professor O'Curry's Lectures, just published.]

NOTE XLI. (Page 333.) *Laws of Property and Succession.*

The whole of the statement here concerning the ancient Irish Laws of Property and Succession is entirely wrong. There never was such "gavel-kind" in Erin, whatever may have existed in the Saxon counties of England. Every family had its separate property, descending to and divisible among the children as securely as under the modern law of France. [See an interesting account, with examples, of the Irish law as it really was, in Professor O'Curry's Introduction to the edition of the *Battle of Magh Leana*, edited by him for the Celtic Society, in 1853, and in the Appendix, No. ii., to the same volume, at pp. 176-187.]

NOTE XLII. (Page 336.) *The "Cota."*

This is not an Irish word at all, but the English word "coat." The Irish word was *ionar*, signifying a frock, or tunic—as the *ionar sroill* (coat of silk), etc. [See ante, Note V.]

NOTE XLIII. (Page 337.) *Uchadán.*

Uchadán was the first smelter of gold in Erin; but he had nothing whatever to do with the invention or use of brilliant or any "colours."

NOTE XLIV. (Page 337.) *The Throne of State.*

There was no such thing as a *breas fhora*. There was simply a *Cathair Riogdha*—literally a "royal chair"—meaning merely the chair used by the king. The word *Foradh* meant, merely, a bench, a form, or seat of any kind.

NOTE XLV. (Page 337.) *The Vow of Allegiance.*

The author is again misled by the customs of feudalism. The Irish clansman did not kneel to his Chief, nor the Chief to the King. They were not so unequal before the Irish law. The clansman simply went up to his Chief and "placed his

hand in his hand" (*chuirsé a lámh ina 'amh*)—shook hands with him in fact—on acknowledging his succession or election to the leadership of the Clann.

NOTE XLVI. (Page 339.) *The "Seanchus Mór."*

For a full account of the SEANCHUS MOR, see Professor O'Curry's *Lectures on the MS. Materials of Ancient Irish History*, Loc. i., p. 16.

NOTE XLVII. (Page 339.) *The "Mur Ollamhan."*

The building anciently known by this name at Tara—situated within one of the enclosures on the Royal Hill—was not a College at all. It was simply the Fort or House of King *Ollamh Fodhla*—the first of the great legislators who founded a national Legislative Assembly at this the seat of the national government of the whole island. The mistake is in translating the word "*Ollamhan*" as the genitive plural, instead of the genitive singular—thus making the sentence "Fort of the *Ollamh's* (Doctors and Professors), instead of "Fort of *Ollamh (Fodhla)*." [See Dr. Petrie's Paper *On the History and Antiquities of Tara*, read before the Royal Irish Academy, in 1839—an Essay which may be referred to as affording a model of the right way to investigate antiquarian questions; and see also Professor Curry's Lectures, just published (J. Duffy, 1861).]

NOTE XLVIII. (Page 339.) *Household Troops and Body Guard.*

The *Lucht Tighe* were properly the Household Troops,—Guards of the House; *Teaghlach* means the household generally. The *Lucht coimeata Rígh* were the body-guards of a king; of which he had, by law, four in constant attendance upon him. (Instances occur, among other places, in the account of the "Battle of *Magh Rath*, and in that of *Clontarf*; etc.)

NOTE XLIX. (Page 359.) *The Breithé Nemhidh.*

Mistranslated "Celestial Judgments," and wrongfully referred to *Fercheirtne* in the text. The meaning of the word is simply the Laws of the Privileged Classes,—not a distinct code or body of laws at all, but only a portion of the great body of laws known under the general name of the *Seanchus Mór*. (See ante, p. 339; and ante Note XLVI.)

NO. E L. (Page 361.) *Executions in Ancient Erin*

This is a mistake. The few executions in ancient Erin were always by way of hanging from a tree.

NOTE LI. (Page 371.) *Boats.*

There was no such thing as a "*coiti*," the word is not Irish, but probably only a modern Irish form of the English word "Cot." The true names of several boats used in ancient times will be found in the *Battle of Magh Leana*, published by the Celtic Society, in 1853, p. 45.

NOTE LIU. (Page 386.) *Runes.*

The "Runes" spoken of, it must be remembered, had no connection whatever with the Gaelic *Oghaim*, and were never used by or known to the people of ancient Erin.

NOTE LIII. (Page 442.) *Lumneach, or Limerick.*

The English "Limerick" is a corruption of the Irish name of the city *Luimneach*. This name is derived (in the ancient topographical tract known as the *Dinnseanchas*) from the cloaks or mantles, *lomain*, laid by the combatants in a battle, fought many ages ago, between Connacht and Munster, near the ford at Thomond Bridge, during which these mantles were carried away by the river. The words *Bailé Gaedhealach* (Town of the Irish, Irishtown) and *Bailé Galldha* (Town of the Strangers, or Foreigners, Englishtown) are altogether modern appellations being simple translations of those modern names for parts of the present city.

NOTE LIV. (Page 517.) *Summoning of a Clann.*

It is, of course, quite possible that beacon fires may have been used to spread an alarm (as of an invasion, a landing, etc.) over the country. But it is quite wrong to describe this as the mode in use for the assembly of a clann, as spoken of in the text. For this purpose the Chief sent messengers, simply. And we know (from the ancient tale of the *Táin Bó Chuailgne*) that the messengers employed for this purpose were professional couriers, always kept in the pay of the King or Chief for such service. They went on horseback; and such a courier had a special name, *each'ach*, which is said to have been derived from

each, a horse. The ordinary word for a horseman was *marcaib*, from *marc*, the common word for a horse (see ante, Note III.).

NOTE LV. (Page 532.) *Law against Surprise.*

There was not exactly any such general law against Surprises as that alluded to in the text. But there certainly was a law, or custom of war, from a very early period, upon the subject, under which it would seem to have been unlawful—even in great extremity—to surprise or make a night attack upon a fortified town or dwelling in which women happened to be at the time, without giving previous notice to have the women removed to some place of safety. A very curious instance of this chivalrous custom occurs in the ancient account of the *Battle of Magh Leana*, which took place early in the third century (see the full edition of this celebrated history, published by the Celtic Society in 1853).

NOTE LVI. (Page 537.) *The Rosg-Catha.*

There is no ancient authority as to this word, nor as to the use of any "Battle Song." The word *Rosg* means merely the Eye; and, metaphorically, Understanding, Explanation, etc. It does not occur anywhere in connection with *Cath* (a Battle), and there is no meaning at all in this epithet, which is probably an invention of Messrs. Walker and Co.

GLOSSARY.

- Adharca Cúil**, p. 9, musical horns [see Note 3].
- Aghadown**, p. 13, properly *Ath-a-Dúin* ("the Ford of the Dún," or fortress), a promontory near Glengariff.
- Airchinnech**, p. 45, the Steward of Church lands (often Englished "Erenach").
- Airrigh feadha**, p. 29, chief timber; i. e. royal timber (as explained in the text).
- Anrath**, pp. 348, 363, the title of the grade in the order of *Filéadh*, or Poets, next the *Ollamh*.
- Arcain (Inis)**, p. 13, the island now called Sherkin, in Bantry Bay, near Glengariff.
- Artri**, pp. 73, 123, the name of the King of Cashel (of Munster) at the time of the first Danish invasion, 8th century.
- Ath-dara**, p. 73, Adare, county Limerick.
- Ath-a-Duin**, p. 13 (see Aghadown).
- Barréad**, p. 11, properly a head-dress like a turban [see Note 5].
- Bailé**, p. 443 [see Note 53].
- Beinn Eadair**, p. 187, now called the Hill of Howth.
- Bial**, a battle-axe; any axe [see Note 3].
- Biatach**, p. 44, literally, a victualler, an officer bound to keep open house under the terms of the aw.
- Brat**, the long cloak or mantle worn over the whole dress of a man [see Note 5].
- Breas Fhoradh**, p. 337, no meaning. *Fhoradh* was a seat: not a throne. A king's seat was called the *Cathair Ríoghda*, or *Rígh Shuidhe*.
- Breatnas**, brooch for a cloak (literally, "cloak-tie"), [see Note 5].
- Breitheamh**, or *Brehon*, p. 12, a judge.
- Breithé Neimhidh**, pp. 29, 359, correctly, the Laws of the Privileged Classes [see Note 49].
- Brughaidh**, p. 44, literally, a farmer or person holding grass lands; he was a *Biatach*.
- Buabhall**, pp. 21, 37, an ox horn [see Note 2].
- Buachaill**, p. 37, a cow-minder, from *bó*, a cow. A shepherd was *aodhairé*, from *oe*, a sheep.
- Bualim Sciath**, p. 187 (a modern word), literally, I strike my shield; a challenger (as one in modern times wheeling his stick to challenge some one to fight him).
- Cana**, p. 348, the fourth order of Poets, or Philosophers, in the *Filidecht* [see Note 11].
- Caoraighacht**, a flock of sheep.
- Carbad**, pp. 10, 177, a chariot, or car [see Note 3].
- Carcair na ngiall**, pp. 145, 392.

- "Prison of the Hostages," at Tara.
- Cathbharr*, p. 10, a helmet; also a man's name [see Notes 3 and 5].
- Cathaigh (Inis)*, p. 448, Scattery Island: from *Cathach*, the name of a monster serpent on it, banished by Saint *Seánán*.
- Cathair Conraoi*, p. 352, in the western portion of the Tralee Mountains, so called from the fort of the celebrated King *Curoi Mac Dairé*, in the first century.
- Ceannfiné*, p. 16, the family head; from *finé*, a family.
- Ceann Mara*, p. 555, Kenmare ("Head of the Sea").
- Ceannruighe*, pp. 209, 401, a merchant.
- Ceann-eidé*, a head-dress, hat or cap; also a man's name [see Note 5].
- Ceithern*, a company of soldiers. *Ceithernach* (Englished, "Kerne"), one of a band of soldiers [see Note 3].
- Ciar*, pp. 16, 132, the son of *Fergus Mac Roigh* and Queen *Meadhbh* (first century), ancestor of O'Connor Kerry; from whom *Ciarraighé*, Kerry; signifying properly that part of Kerry next the Shannon.
- Ciúil*, musics. *Ceol* (nom. sing.), music.
- Clairseach*, p. 12, a modern word for a harp with a sounding board [see Note 3].
- Clasamhnaigh*, p. 322 [see Note 37], tricksters, jugglers; legerdemain performers;—not jesters, as stated in the text.
- Clíamhain*, p. 459, a son-in-law, or brother-in-law.
- Cnocferna*, p. 43, near Bruff, county Limerick.
- Cochall*, p. 11, a short cloak, or cape [see Note 5].
- Colp.i*, the third of a cow [see Note 16].
- Colpa (Inbher)*, p. 321, Drogheda, the inlet of the Boyne, so called from the drowning thereof *Colpa*, one of the sons of Milesius.
- Comharba*, p. 42, an heir, or successor.
- Com na n-Druad*, p. 124. No such place. *Com* is properly the hollow in the side or flank; and so the hollow of a mountain.
- Conaillé Muirtheimné*, p. 321, in Louth.
- Conaing*, p. 118, a Fomorian chief who lived on Torry Island (called *Tor Conaing*), Donegal.
- Conn Crether*, pp. 101, 126, 542, a proper name, but not a historical one.
- Crann Tabhail*, p. 77 [see Note 3].
- Crom* or *Crumh*, a maggot. [As to *Cromlo Cruach*, see Note 15.]
- Cruit*; *Cruitiré*, p. 13, the harp; harper [see Note 3].
- Cuailgné*, p. 206, a district in Louth, the chief scene in the Tale of the *Táin bo Chuailgné*.
- Curaðh*, pp. 79, 340, a champion [see Note 3].
- Dealg*, a thorn, or spike; a pin.
- Dealg Fallainé*, pp. 143, 337.
- Deas M humhain*, p. 15.
- Donn Dairé go bragh!* pp. 101, 126.
- Draí*, a Druid.
- Douth*, a fool, or jester [see Note 37].
- Each*; *eachlach*, a horse; a horse courier [see Note 54].
- Eadair (Beinn)*, the Hill of *Eadar*, now called, the Hill of Howth. *Eudar* is believed to be one of the people of Partholan.
- Eo*, a brooch (from its shape; literally a salmon) [see Note 5].

- Faith-liaigh**, p. 72, "prophetic physician" [see Note 8].
- Falláiní** (*Dealg*), p. 143, mantle-brooch.
- Fallaing**, a mantle.
- Fear comhlainn easguid**, p. 10, properly, a champion who fights fifty men [see Note 3].
- Fearamuighé Fene**, pp. 513, 560, the men (*féara*) of the plain of Fene (or, as in Book of Lismore, *Meiné*, of minerals), Fermoy, county Cork.
- Feis**, pp. 122, 323, a feast.
- Ferenn** (same as *nasg-niadh*) a champion's garter-badger [see Note 3].
- Fidiol**, the ancient Irish name of the violin; the modern fiddle [see Note 2].
- Filé**, p. 12, a Poet (and Philosopher). [As to the Order of Poets, see Note 11; and see p. 348 of the text.]
- Finn Geinté**, p. 89, the Fair Pagans, or People; Norwegians.
- Fíodhbac**, a bow [see Note 3].
- Fiontraigh**, Ventry (near Dingle).
- Fleasg**, pp. 14, 79, a bracelet [see Note 5].
- Foltach Fuithrimé**, p. 53, a person holding grass land without stock, letting it to a man having cows.
- Fomharaigh**, p. 118, gen. pl. of *Fomharach*, & Fomorian (as these sea-pirates are called in ancient Irish History).
- Fochtuchan**, pp. 129, 348, the 6th of the 7 grades of *Fílideacht* [see Note 10].
- Franc Amhuis**, French mercenary soldiers.
- Gae**, a dart, or javelin [see Note 3].
- Gallóglach**, pp. 9, 83, literally, a foreign (mercenary) soldier (Englished, "Gallowglass"), [see Note 3].
- Gleann-amhnach**, p. 381.
- Gleann-garbh**, p. 362, Glengariff (literally, the rough glen).
- Gleann Maghair**, p. 389, Glanmire, near Cork [see an interesting note on this name and place at p. 156 of Professor Curry's *Battle of Magh Leana*, Celtic Society, 1853].
- Gleann na n-Gealt**, p. 352, the Glen of the Lunatics.
- Gradh** (a-), p. 91, my love.
- Grianán na n-inghean**, p. 339, the Sunny Bower of the Maidens (at Tara).
- Ilbreachta**, p. 196, "many colours."
- Imleach**, p. 348, Emly, county Tipperary.
- Ionar**, a coat or tunic [see Note 5].
- Inbher Cholpa**, p. 321, Drogheda [see *Colpa*].
- Inis Arcain**, p. 13, the Island of Arcan; now corruptly called Sherkin, in Bantry Bay.
- Inis Cathaigh**, p. 448, Scatterry [see *Caithaigh*].
- Laighean** (*Magh*), p. 187, the Plain of Leinster, i.e. the plain of the *Liff* (Liffey).
- Laoch**, p. 340 [see Note 48].
- Leiné**, a shirt [see Note 5].
- Loch-lannach**, p. 340, Danes.
- Long**, p. 43, a ship. (Also a tent; so called from being like a ship turned upside down.)
- Luimneach na long**, p. 43, "*Luimneach* (Limerick) of the Ships" [see Note 53].
- Lucht Tighé**, p. 339, Household troops [see Note 48].
- Mac-fuirmidh**, p. 348, the fifth class of *Fileadh*, or poets [see Note 11].
- Mainchin**, p. 40, the patron Saint of Limerick, whose name is now barbarized "Munchia."
- Marc**; *marc-luagh*, pp. 10, 80, a horse; cavalry [see Note 3].

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
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